

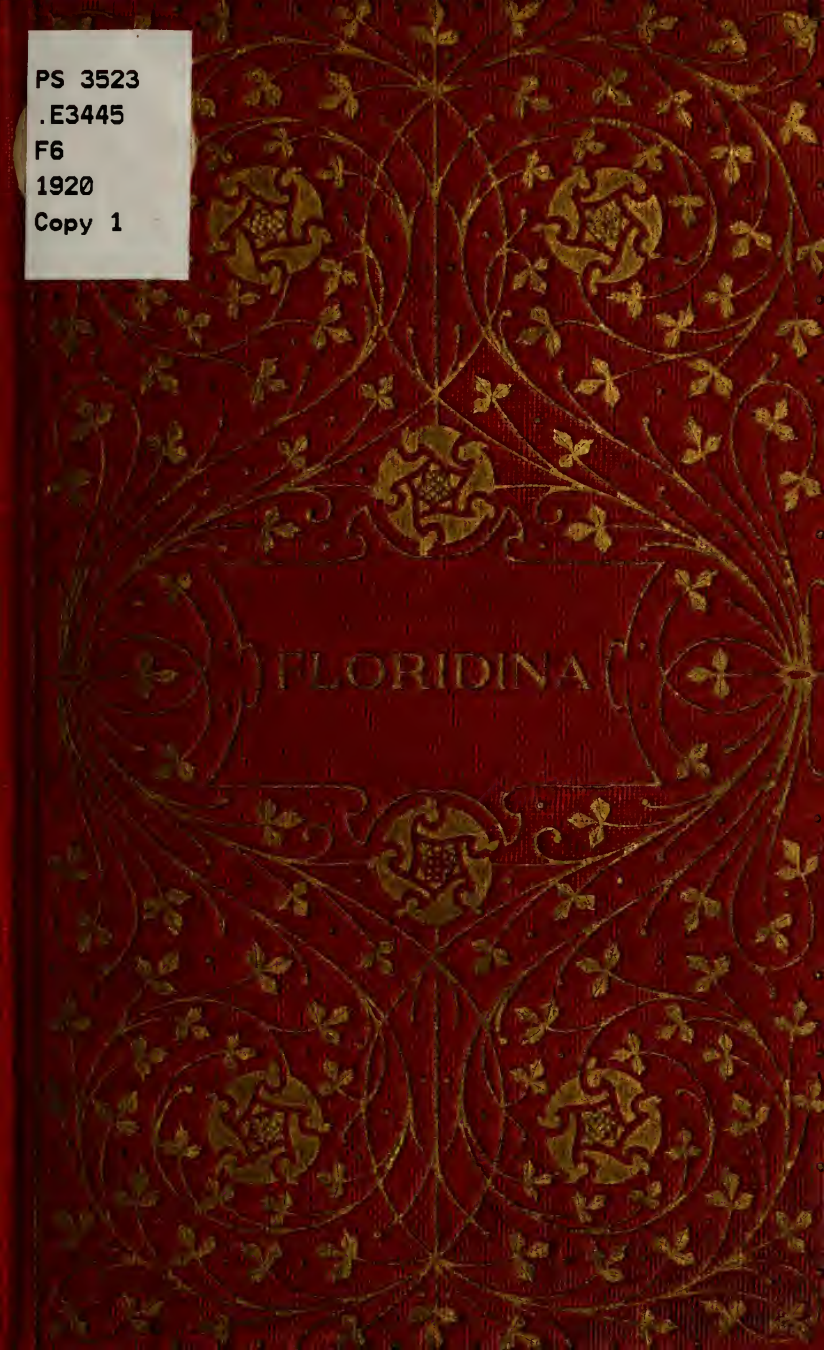
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FLORIDINA



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FLORIDINA

FLORIDINA

POEMS

By

SAMUEL D. LEE

NEW YORK
JAMES T. WHITE & CO.

1920

PS3523
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1920

SEP 27 1920

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FLORIDINA

On violet bank,
 'Mid grasses rank,
The sunshine is stealing over;
 Does love, away,
 This wintry day,
Think of her careless rover.

Thro' dreamy hours
 I pluck fair flowers,
By forest trail and ramble;
 Or woo sweet sleep,
 Where soft winds sweep
Some jasmine covered bramble.

But she, tonight,
 Where anthracite
Throws out a radiant glowing.
 Draws close her chair;
 Without, the air
Is murky thick—'tis snowing.

 'Mid bays I hear
 Low, mournful, clear.
The wild notes of the whippoorwill

And watch the clouds—
Like drifting shrouds—
That all the sky with phantoms fill.

She hears the roar
Of hails that pour
Along the roof and frozen ground;
It is all gloom
No sun, no moon,
But sleet, but snow, but ice is found.

II

My bird may sing in sunny climes;
Her bells may ring in chilling rhymes.

My flowers may bloom the twelve month round;
Her pure snows deck the frosty ground.

She wanders forth on summer days;
With me the summer ever stays.

My thousand trees perfume the air;
With her they raise their cold limbs bare.

I breathe with joy the warm south breath;
Her northland lies 'neath robes of death.

III

My Love-bird would sing
Forever and aye,
Could his warbling bring
You away—away.

SONG OF THE BIRD

O come from the frost land,
O come from the lost land,
O come to the dear sunny south—sunny south,
O come from the ice land
O come to this nice land,
O come to our own bonny south—bonny south
O come to my own bonny south.

O escape the cold blast,
O flee from the bold blast,
O come where the orange blooms for thee—blooms for
thee.

Bid good-bye the light snows,
Bid farewell the white snows,
For myrtle and rose blooms for thee—blooms for
thee,

O myrtle and rose blooms for thee.
O come from the dull skies,
And where storm-clouds arise,
And live where the air ever cheers—ever cheers.

O come where the beams shine,
For such beauty as thine,
And love is but born of the years—of the years,
Where love is but born of the years.

My bird may not sing
Forever and aye,
For bright hopes a-wing
Are flying this way.

Where hearts united
In ever fáir day,
Can live as they're plighted
'Neath laurel and bay.

SUNSET

A Florida Forest Camp

The sun flames on the brink of pine,
It spreads its crimson wings afar,
And poises there, as fain to stay
Where beauty sleeps the hours away,
As though 'twere tired of constantly

Journeying toward eternity;
As if 'twould pause where no toils mar
And rest beneath the odorous spray
Of virgin's bower and eglantine

It never spreads its wings so wide
Nor shows its colored plumage o'er
Another spot on earth as here;
Not o'er the Mediterranean tide,
Nor at the Dardanelles' door,
Nor on the other Mexic shore,
On higher or on lower sphere.

The lake lies in tranquility,
As ordered Christ on Galilee,
So calmly blue and freshly fair;
Save where a few faint ripples show
That some old saurian swims below.
Its rim is fringed around unbroke
With feather'd grass and moss-hung oak.
A gnarled magnolia bends above,
Its leaves of glossy green scarce move;
Its gorgeous buds are bursting wide,
So purely white, of incense rare,—
Angels, perhaps, I've thought would prize
These lovely flowers to strew inside
The chancel rail in Paradise.

The brown squirrel seeks its basket-home
Of cross-laced twigs, where rough bough leaps:
The rattler sounds his castinets,
And draws his mottled form away.
The winco-pipe its petals fold,
As fearful that some bold night-gnome
Would touch its heart with fingers cold.
The stammel-crested picus sleeps,
And sings in lower, softer frets
The Cardinal in swift volee.

NIGHT

A Florida Forest Camp

Pile on the knots; these hearts of pine
That reek with flame of Pluto's mine,
Whose stronger half fell to decay
And sprang to gaseous realms away.
If these are souls then left behind
And long, as does the chaste suttee,
To join in some starward abode—
Oh, bid them better speed than wind,
And let their leaping chariot be
Like that in which Elijah rode.

An amphitheater of light,
With velvet blackness hung around,
Thro' which pine columns, grand in height,
Corinthian capital'd in green
Rise up, to hold the dome profound,
The wonder of the countless crowds
Who are on earth and who have been.
Thou glorious sky! O man, would breast
The ether in a rapid flight
To reach the realm of silence, where
The billowy softness of thy clouds
Invite to never ending rest;
Where myriad flaming stars keep ward,
And dreamy fancies ever guard,
For all who come to slumber there.

From off the distant black-jack ridge
Comes loud and sharp the sand crane's howl;
And in the jungle down the stream
Echoes the wildcat's wildest scream,
And the gruff call of the moon-eyed owl;
The salamander tunnels run
Skillful as any engineer
With compass and theodolite,
And every rod or so appear
Glistening in the bright fire's light
His pyramids of fresh, damp sand.
Great yellow spiders, striped with black,
From twig to stump, forward and back,

Throw filaments that soon expand
By dexterous curve and marvelous lap
Into a curious, glittering trap,
For flies that stir with rise of sun.

These things and scenes for them alone,—
For miles there is no human sign,—
Two stalwarts from another clime,
In flannel shirts, and black with grime,
Who sit on ancient log of pine
As very princes on a throne;
Who smoke perique in meerschaum pipe,
And drink of bourbon, mellow, ripe;
Rehearse old tales of travel lore,
Old tales they've told oft times before—
Old tales by which they set great store.

The fire burns low. The sinewy men
Stretch their tired limbs, and sleepy yawn;
They look with care to rifle charge.
To pistol cartridge and cap—
Ready for foe, tho' small or large.
Grasping the ropes, with graceful spring
They reach the hammock's easy swing
And closely 'round their blankets wrap.
Morpheus waves his wand, and then,
Thro' dreamy vistas of far home.
Folds them in magic of sleep, from
Which they are freed only at dawn.

A MAIDEN'S "NO"

"Know ye a fairer land than this
Beneath the heaven's shining sun,
Where all there is of earthly bliss
May surely be by manhood won?"
"Ah, no," the traveler said; "Fair Miss,
I've journeyed far and looked on none."

"Know ye a climate that for health
Is better than South Florida,
Where virgin soil gives greater wealth
And asks less labor for the pay?"
The traveler glanced, perchance with stealth,
At her, but boldly answered, "Nay."

"Know ye a land with bluer skies?
Or one where clearer waters flow?
Where brighter colors drape sunrise,
Or aught to match this sunset glow?"
The traveler closed his steel-gray eyes,
And, turning, simply answered, "No."

"Know ye a land where tree and vine
Will make for man a better lot?"

Know ye an air that's so like wine—

In short, another favored spot?"

The traveler made impatient sign,

And said, "My angel, I do not."

"You've questioned me, and I've told truth,

And I will even further go.

I've seen no maid so fair, forsooth,

Will ye repay the debt ye owe?"

"Ah, me, thou wandering, gray-eyed youth,

My answer, like all yours, is No!"

"And I have come from fartherest earth,

From Russia white and warm Cathay,

To kneel to thee, sole one of worth,

And at thy shrine due homage pay."

"Oh, turn, brave traveler, from this dearth

Of love, for I must say thee Nay!"

And am I buried here in woe,

Where Nature in her beauty lies,

And ye'll not with me forward go

To make it perfect Paradise?"

"Ah, silly man, dost ye not know

Two negatives mean—Yes? Arise!"

THE ST. JOHNS, FLORIDA

There is sweeping, wild joy in this life of mine
On thy banks, O broad-flowing river!
Where the wind woos to sleep, and the soft sunshine
Through the tupelo branches shiver.

I dream of the time in the far-away past,
When red-men followed thy courses;
And sigh o'er the legends that tell what trees hast
Sheltered the Cherokee forces.

And the warriors and maids who wooed in thy bowers
Left love marks for later day story,
In the jasmine showers and the white orange flowers
Which ever unfold to thy glory.

I think of the prince who from Spain's martial line
Sought where thy music waves darkle
The wonderful font, wreath'd in wild rose and vine,
Where waters of life ever sparkle.

Thy sunshine and shades were the forest child's hopes,
And they valiantly fought for thee when
There came the pale face to thy green sunny slopes,
Now none the less lovely than then.

'Tis the clime where magnolias perfume the soft air,
Where cypress and myrtle entwining;
Where cardinals wing, and the turtle dove fair
Toward love is ever inclining.

Where the cape-rose whitens the thickets' deep gloom,
And mosses are daintily clinging;
Where cactus flowers and lemon trees bloom,
And mocking birds sweetly are singing.

Where cypress and palm gently sway in the sun
'Neath the breath from warm, placid seas,
And one summer ends when another's begun,
In this land of the vines and trees.

The clime of all climes, where each moment of life
Takes an arrow from sorrow's quiver,
May you always be loved—with never more strife—
For thy beauties, O glorious river!

WERE YOU BUT HERE

I

Were you but here to pick wild flowers with me,
Blue lupin, calopogon, red wild-pea,
Rich yellow orchis in a golden sea,
Pure, waxy blossoms of the sweet bay tree;

II

Were you but here to see the flaunting flower
Of pawpaw, creamy cacti's wealthy dower,
Palmetto's racemes, sweet-briar petals shower,
Low, lovely violets where pine trees tower;

III

Were you but here, I'd gather mistletoe,
With holly leaves down where wild roses blow,
Where jasmine, smilax and fire lilies grow,
Weaving a chaplet for your brow of snow.

IV

Were you but here in April to behold
Magnolia grand, white velvet flower unfold,
Scattering perfume as spendthrifts scatter gold,
Cloying us here with sweetnesses untold;

V

Tall yuccas plumes of milky bells I choose
To mingle with lantana's varied hues,
Crab's eye (Abrus) vine, bringing weather news,
While it its last year's scarlet harvest strews.

VI

Were you but here beside this round quiet lake,
That like a film the quick impressions take
Of stately trees around, the stars to make
Of this a heaven, their own heaven forsake.

VII

Were you but here among great columned pines
With wild flowers all around displaying signs
Of welcome, coral red with green combines,
Among white petaled phlox, blue day-star shines;

VIII

Were you but here where green loblollys shade
The stream that ripples on toward yonder glade;
By fragrant cedars flanked; a retreat made
For sentiment, were you here unafraid.

IX

Were you but here to see blue herons spread
Wide wings to wing from marshy sedges dead
To farthest cypress draped deep and dread,
Where they, in nests of awkwardness, were bred.

X

We have in silence waited—no word said,
And all the woods to silence, too, were wed;
Then life takes courage; first that's heard and read
That of limp sawyers that logs saw and shred.

XI

Up high, the cypress, plume of ardent red,
Above an ivory bill and night-black head
Peeps shyly from a hole. His matted bed
The fox-squirrel leaves to race the limbs instead.

XII

There comes, with stride of royalty inbred,
Lord of dank hammockhaunts—suspicion fled—
The Turkey cock in glittering bronze, full fed
On berries from the saw palmetto shed.

XIII

A saurian searching for his weekly bread
Climbs up the mud where pigs have come and bled.
Aix sponsa whence from where alarmed they sped
Float out in iridescent beauty yede.

XIV

Hoarse calls the frog; so always he has pled;
Silent the gopher's and the wildcat's tread.
Appeals by scores appear, left, right, ahead—
Were you here thru umbraceous pathways led.

XV

Were you but here beneath this spreading oak
Draped in its flowing gray-green mossy cloak,
Those gay-flowered lindens, where bees' humming broke
Into a gentle roar near midday's stroke,

XVI

Were you but here by canopy of palm,
Whose rustling leaves a melancholy psalm
Perpetually sings, a saving balm
When overjoyousness endangers calm;

XVII

Were you but here when orange flowers appear,
Their deep, intoxicating sweetness near
And far thrown on the evening atmosphere—
A love-borne breath from far Edenic sphere.

XVIII

Were you but here the mocking bird to hear
In divers songs, silvery, liquid, clear,
Answered by the cardinal's music dear
As cousinly he shows his plumes so near;

XIX

Were you but here to see chamelions change,
Brilliant butterflies from flower to flower range,
Frail web spiders arrange and rearrange,
Decked with bright diamond dewes of morning strange,

XX

Were you but here when first faint streaks of dawn
Bid farewell to the stars of night withdrawn,
Which, lighting yet themselves are paltry pawn
To Sol's effulgence flooding lake and lawn,

XXI

That swiftly touching harpstrings of the spheres
Wakens our world with music human ears
Cannot be deaf to. Every bird, too, hears
And answers with a morning song that cheers.

XXII

Were you but here when falls the noon-tide hush
And warmer currents animation crush,
Until one's thoughts, past all restraints brush
On zephyrs off to unmapped dreamland rush.

XXIII

Were you but here when up from the southwest
A wee cloud grows until the arch is dress'd
In swirling black; hot lightning rips the breast
Of mourning heavens—a fiery devil-jest.

XXIV

Deep thunders crash to break the wonted rest
Of nature; wild winds sweep in merry quest
Of branch to strip and forest-lord to wrest
From out the soil their power to manifest.

XXV

Rain falls as if a river o'er the crest
Of a great dam in angry volume press'd;
It drives and drifts from every point to test
Each crack, and, oft, inside unwelcome guest.

XXVI

It slacks! Unfolded in the east, possessed
Of hope and love, to all mankind address'd,
A double bow by angel lips caress'd,
Brilliant and beautiful and by God bless'd.

XXVII

An hour! Where seen a cloud? the earth impress'd
By sunny flood; but, leaf and flower now tress'd
In dewey pearls; and air, refined, bequest
To man to find in life's fresh hour new zest.

XXVIII

Were you but here to see the sunset skies
Tinged with a hundred shades of brilliant dyes—
Great Banners which the God of heaven flies
Glimpsing the beauties of our Paradise;

XXIX

Were you but here when on the evening air
Spirits of Beauty from every sylvan lair
Come to enmesh the senses into fair
Elysian dreams wholly unknown elsewhere;

XXX

Were you but here when gentle night winds blow
Across from waves of Gulf of Mexico,
Till from the æolian pine needles flow
Melody so soft, plaintive, soothing, low ;—

XXXI

Were you but here when the full moon looks down,
Of night at once the lovely queen and crown,
Whose floods of dreamy light o'erwhelm and drown
All irritations that the day brought 'round ;

XXXII

Were you but here beneath the stars tonight
We would, at least in fancy, take a flight
Across the realms of space to that great light
Canopus, than six hundred suns more bright.

XXXIII

Were you but here, we'd dream new dreams, and build
Our castles near, by waters Peace hath still'd
Whose battlements the rays of sunrise gild,
Whose chambers are by Love's effluence fill'd.

BEAUTY CANNOT DIE

Across the parallels bright tho'ts come troopin'
Whence frosty figures glow upon the pane
To where in sunny splendor azure lupin
Proclaims the coming of the spring again—
Heralds forth the vernal equinox again.

'Tis one bloom only in the vast procession—
New pageantry as weeks and months go by,
That on a wanderer leaves the deep impression,
While flowers may fade, their beauty cannot die—
Tho' substance withers, spirit cannot die.

And so with kindred, to other realms departing,
Behind leave all the loveliness of life
To lift the shadows and to ease the smarting,
'Til found in verity beyond the strife—
'Til they're regained in truth beyond the strife.

A VALENTINE

I send you some greenery—some greenery to wear,
Entwined, as were roses entwined in your hair,
And if, when I come, I should chance to find it there,
I would know, so I think, what to do.

The story is told,—a mere legend, of course,
That the mistletoe has the magical force
To draw a knight-errant from afar to the source
Of a joy scintillatingly true.

Some say that alone to his eye, 'tis revealed,
For eyes that are lighted by love unconcealed,
Quickened, as flashes on the magnetic field,
And the fire of the stroke never miss.

And, since elder day, when he reaches the shrine,
Where mistletoe branches invitingly shine,
His heart leapeth forth to the pleasure divine
Of the blush to the answering kiss.

A VALENTINE

I gather violets on the slopes
And orchis on the lea,
And read in them anew the hopes
Tho' miles and miles are now between
One lovely maid and me,
My heart goes back to that sweet scene
Beside the sea—and thee.
That grew beside the sea;

I wander down thro' Lovers' Lane
And wish you here today
To walk with me this bowering fane
And cheer the lonely way;
I bind for you a wreath of bays
Embroidered with jasmine,
That shall keep green our love always,
My charming Valentine.

A VALENTINE

The east is full of splendor—
With brilliancy aglow,
As Morning's fairies lend her
Bright colors from the bow;
The rose throws wide its petals,
The pine's long needles shine,
As mem'ry backward settles
To far-off Valentine.

The mocking bird is singing
His many tuneful lays,
The cardinals are winging
In flashing, crimson ways;
The golden thrushes flutter
With scarce a vocal sign,
But all together utter
A prayer for Valentine.

The midday sun is glowing
In a cerulean sky,
The river, calmly flowing,
Breathes a soft lullaby.
The dogwood's pure white blooming
My forest pathways line
And melts the lonely glooming
With thoughts of Valentine.

Here spreads a beauteous carpet
Of violets pearl and blue,
Which have, thro' passion's war, kept
Love's beacons burning true.
There, lovely orchids dainty
Their blushing heads incline:
With those and these, I paint a
Picture of Valentine.

Behold! the sun is sinking—
A gorgeous color scheme,
Whereat the soul is drinking
In ecstasy and dream—
Is eloquently speaking
A language scarcely mine,
And yet, the heart's deep seeking
Spells out a Valentine.

In long festoons, the mosses
Wave gently to and fro

Where the gaunt cypress tosses
Its arms in the moon's glow.
Odors of orange and lemon
Intoxicate as wine;
Night puts another gem on
The brow of Valentine.

The day's winds are in slumber;
Up through the soft, warm night
I gaze, where without number
The stars are shining bright.
More beautiful and clearer
Than stars, those eyes of thine
Which, as they are, seem nearer,
My far off Valentine.

TO VALENTINE

What distance lies between the snow
And semi-tropic land
Where streamlets musically flow
With flowers on either hand?
Shall my mind not go far afield
To where a love had birth,
And to that love a homage yield
As great as all on earth?
There's not an hour in all the day
But what I think of thee;

There's not a flower by all the way
But what I'd pluck for thee—
The pretty violets blue and white—
The yellow sweet jasmine—
Come whispering if they may not light
The path of Valentine.
And why should I not acquiesce
In prayer of flower and vine
That twine and blossom but to bless
My distant Valentine?

IN CAMP IN FLORIDA

Far from the noise and confusion,
The traffic and toil of the street,—
Far from the heartless allusion
To notes I'm expected to meet,—
I'm here, where flowers in profusion
Are spread as prayer-rugs at my feet.

The flowers, and wonderful mosses
Woven in patterns that shame
The skill of adepts in flosses
And wools, for beauty, and claim
The homage I give without loss as
Each musci I'd study and name.

Far from the strivers for money—
Sordid blood-treasure of earth
That's stored, as bees store their honey,
For robbers next in their mirth,
I'm here where the sky is all sunny
And gentle Pegasus hath birth.

Briefly I've joined in the striving,—
Taken my place in the mart,
To find I'm but fitted for hiving
The harm, the hurt and the smart,
From which I shrink for the shriving
Which musical birds grant the heart.

I criticize never the master,
Hoarding as shepherds herd sheep,
Nor sorrow, when Fortune has cast her
Favors on others piled deep.
I merely wish rest where these vaster
Pine forests invite me to sleep;

Here, where the mocking bird's singing
His cheerful, pertinent lays,
Where cardinals brightly are winging—
Flashes of crimson in bays,
With thrushes up yonder clinging,
To make their gold-coated displays.

On atmosphere sensuous, flowering
Jasmine comes over the sense,
While down from the Styrax tree towering,
Blossoms, full ripened, fall dense,
Whitening the ground with their showering
O'er Peace River lowlands immense.

Days pass as dreams pass with dreamers:—
'Tis morn, when the awakened east
Throws up its flamboyant streamers
Of wondrous favors, the least
With Beauty's compared, would outbeam hers
And she find her own praise decreas'd.

'Tis then that the woodlands awaken—
Are filled with echoing song:
The birds, which their keynotes have taken
From heaven, and down here prolong;
A pleasure ne'er to be shaken
Or even interpreted wrong;

With hearts that seem overflowing
With life and perfect good cheer,
Praising the Lord, and not knowing
Existence should be in fear
Of reaping from their Adam's sowing
In the bird world's earliest year.

How glitter jewels of the morning;
Diamonds in rays of the sun
Are petty besides those adorning
The webs the spiders have spun
O'er bush and o'er grass, as scorning
Darkness and toil, until done.

Look on the gems and the weaving,
Mostly admire which you please,
Either's beyond the believing—
Changes that never shall cease:
Those to the spider's work cleaving,
To the beautiful jewelry these.

Gray squirrels incessantly chatter,
Making emphatic protest
'Gainst the invasion,—a matter
Important enough to be prest—
To the intruder; the latter
But envies the happy distrest:

Pretty chaps, they grow confidential
Should one exhibit some tact,—
Advancing in course providential
To make harmonious pact
Instead of killing. My pen shall
No moral put down from this fact.

They come down a tree on a spying
Trip, sharpened, active, alert,
Their bushy tails high-arched, and eyeing
You with trained vision expert,
And suddenly scamper then, crying,
Returning when they've found no hurt.

Likewise with birds, quickly discerning
Danger approaching their door,
They're easily taught, and soon learning
For them you're friendly, and more,
Till, their bridges backward are burning,
They linger, and eat of your store.

And the days! with their perfect o'erarching
Stretch of immaculate blue,
The sun not too trivial nor scorching,
Bringeth in answer most true
The flowers and the fruit to its marching—
Each day giving forth something new.

The orchis that bow in the grasses—
Delicate yellow and pink,
Blue lupins in wide-spreading masses
Day stars just over the brink
Of the hill; then what surpasses
Passion flower as Edenic link?

As sun rays are gathered by lenses
Humid air gathers in night
Perfume of the citrus on senses
That falter, and magnolias quite
Overpower; and here my pen says
These all, with cape-jasmine, are white.

In patience, at eve, and half lying
Far from the crack of the lash,
My thoughts to my own thoughts replying,
Whether sound, silly or rash;
Watching the fire in its dying—
Falling from flame into ash.

Facing the sun in his setting—
Marvelous light in the west;
The evils of earth all forgetting,
The soul in tremulous quest
Goes forth at Fancy's wide letting
And I remain here at rest.

Always a change in its beauty
Ever a shifting of scene,
As varied as richness of booty
A baron brings to his queen—
A palette of color to suit a
Painter who dreams aniline.

Reds that are coming and going
Mark the whole gamut of shades;
The lights into darker are flowing,
The darkest constantly fades,
The gold in brilliancy showing
On edges of blue it embraids.

Wide on the horizon spreading,
Touching the crown of the arch,
Color on color fast treading,
From purple to silver of larch—
Hues of a Tyrolese wedding
Or fanciful mardi-gras march.

Color to color is blended,
Exquisite coin from God's mint;
Fainter and fainter, yet splendid
In gleam, in glamor, in glint;
Fading and fading, is ended
With never of red a hint.

And stars come out in their brightness,
O'erspreading the firmament
Conveying the mind with lightness
Thru realms whence their glow is sent,
Wandering in wonder no mite less
Than in roaming daylight's extent.

'Tis easy to talk of billions
Of miles yon Algol's away,
But well might it be in octillions
Under the limited sway
Of the mind that vastness still stuns
Until put completely at bay.

Problems perplexing make weary
The brain that's taken in quest
By speculation that's mere a
Bale-light that leads 'til opprest
Are all senses beneath dreary—
The dreary deep maze of unrest.

As forces of tempest are lost in
Efforts o'erstrained, so at last
The mind is no longer engrossed in
Grossness of strenuous blast,—
But finds itself happily gloss'd in
The waters on which it is cast.

Smooth river of sleep that flowest
Down to the eternal sea,
Never yet lives he who knowest
How he goes, bondman or free;
Whether the soul go to soweth
Seed on the bank beyond Lethe,

Or, if, as Brahman is preaching,
It falls like a drop of rain
Into the ocean far-reaching
And like that same drop again
Comes back to earth for new teaching.
Experience, knowledge and pain.

With an "if" we are obliged to leave it
As from the beginning it's grown;
Mere "if," and if you believe it
Sprung from a postulate sown
On barrens, and naught to relieve it
From doubts on the chance wind blown

Here, with the towering pines keeping
Watch o'er the camp thru the night,
The camper, child-like, is sleeping,
Bothers of life put to flight,—
Thru leaves the zephyrs are creeping
Intoning a musical rite.

Rest! Dreaming not that you follow
Hound-haunted deer in the chase;
Rest! Without dreams that o'er fallow
Broad turkey tracks you would trace;
Rest! As on hill and in hollow
Darkness all land marks efface.

Soothing the night and its voices!

Soothing the odor of pine!

Soothing the wind that rejoices

Entangled in branch and in vine!

Soothing the stream's music choice as

An anthem subdued and divine.

Sleep! Elfs of night are bestrewing

Your couch with blossoms of thorn!

Sleep! 'Neath the hand that's bedewing

Your bed where you liest lorn!

Sleep! Sleep on in rest that's renewing!

Sleep on, O sleeper, 'til morn.

MAID OF AVON

The sunlight falls in splendor

Among the pines of Avon,

And soft the waters lave on

Verona's shores, and lend her

The subtle charms that move

The heart to thoughts of love.

The south wind comes as spirits

From far Elysian realms,

And blushing cheek o'erwhelms

With greeting that inherits

The passion born of time,

Devotedly sublime.

The oars splash in the water,
Her words ring on the air,
And heaven itself is there
With that fair northern daughter,
While this heart far away
Knows rest nor night nor day. •

The stars in hosts are glowing
From their unmeasured way;
Their lights in glory play
Around this maiden's going—
Orion, the Pleiades
Bless such a one as she is.

The sunbeams light the lowland
Where violets spring up thickly,
And I would pluck them quickly
And enweave them in a band
With lilies white as snow
To deck the maiden's brow.

The aster and the jasmine,
The sweet-briar and the rose,
And every flower that grows,
Secrets for this maid divine
Are ready to unfold—
Sweet secrets, new but old.

Would I were there to gather
The flowers that bloom for her,
Happy if she'd prefer
That I would do it, rather—
Rather than any other
Wiser, better brother.

A VICTIM

I

I came down to this little house today,
Sixteen by twelve, the merest rough-board box
Built by a man as if in careless play,
But yet he was most serious. To my knocks
No answer came, for, with the common clay
His flesh has mingled since I last was here
Ten months ago. I sat upon the step
And looked down on the pretty lake so clear
From which the sunset's ruddy tints have crept
And left a steel-blue color far and near.
Save by the further shore where a black band
Is backed by the thick ranks of towering pines.
But, coming nearer, here upon this hand,
I see, half washed away by rains, the lines
Where he had struggled in the barren sand
To make a garden, 'round which few frail lath
Protected what he vainly sought to grow.

And down the slope, upon that hand, the path
He went with steps that weakly grew and slow
For the pure water of the lake, which hath
Deliciousness that strangers cannot know.

II

I look upon the sunset's fainter shad
And my mind wanders far across the seas
To Fatherland, whose memory never fades,
Where a young man has taken his degrees
From Heidelberg, the highest of his grades,
And with his parchments, and his name as heir
To large estates and an ancestral hall,
And the whole world appearing doubly fair,
Goes back, ambitiously to conquer all,
To find that spendthrifts had stripped all things bare.
But what was that? Had he not wealth of lore
Of that great school, which marks the road to fame?
And with his love—ah, I would not say more
Than that she turned with eyes of scornful flame
From him who wooed when he the titles bore,
And now would wed—'twas a preposterous claim.

III

Perhaps the earth in time will grow enough
In love and goodness so that God will send

Millennial justice to smooth out the rough
And thorny paths his children now must wend.
My old world friend fell at his last rebuff
Which left his life but as the empty shell
From which was taken all there was of worth,
And he turned westward where he felt that hell
Was not so fierce as in his land of birth,—
And one in peace and hope might calmly dwell,—
To the republic, where the people's rights
Are bedded in the fundamental law,
Where honesty burns universal lights,
Where men their fellow men from danger draw
Where all is heaven, and where nothing blights.
Such was the innocence and profound sweep
Of unsophistication which this man
Who, spite his learning, let the dream-gods leap
And frisk before him, a morganic clan;
And while indeed o'er sorrows he would weep,
His eyes a restful haven here would scan.

IV

Thus he precisely was the one to fall
In the first hole across his pathway dug,
And it was ready, as for strangers all
From foreign lands the sanctimonious thug
Stood on the wharf with oily tongue to call
Heaven to witness that for rectitude
He had few equals, in the church's name,

And by the book of prayer which did protrude
From underneath his arm, a holy flame
Blinding to all; disreputable—crude,
The cheat, the bunco man, the common thief
And easy liar, who could sneak a purse
With deafened ear to plaintive calls of grief,
Would leave the victim penniless, and, worse,
A stranded immigrant without relief
In stranger land under a stranger curse.

V

He's freed from suffering, my pure German friend,
And no one knows just when or how he died,
For in this solitude he reached the end
Of human things with no one by his side
To say a kindly word or to aid lend.
I dare say that he deemed it just as well
For those professions were not as a sieve.
His soul could safely with the Father dwell,
But he whose torment it is still to live
Will yet, like Dives, raise up his voice from hell
For a cool drink which none will ever give.

THE ISLE OF THE BLESSED

A Romance

PRELUDE

A hermit sat in his cabin door,
The evening wind moved his locks of gray,
And he looked straight out, and far away
Where the fretful waters washed the shore.

He looked straight out, but he neither saw
The stately pine nor the rolling wave;
Beyond all these, from the past's deep grave
He saw a spirit the dark slab draw.

He reached for his pipe and blew a note,
Another, and more, and filled the air
With an uncouth strain he would not dare
That a stranger ear by it were smote.

It gave surcease to the dawdling day,
And pleasantly bridged the hollow hours,
And what, indeed, were its passing powers
To other than he who tuned the play?

If out of the past it charmed the sprites
Who brought dear joys of a younger time,
Renewed the pleasures of youthful mime,
These all were only his and the night's.

He softly played for enjoyment rare
Of himself alone, and echoes came
From the pines that towered against the flam
Of the southland's sunset ardent flare.

Away from the world, the world was naught
To him who rest for himself had found
In forests foreign to every sound
Save those of nature this lone one sought.

And if he but touch the pipes to please
Himself for an hour, why, who shall say
The song is such that he shall not play
The glimmer'ng stars, or the night's faint breeze?

Not they, indeed, to the child who makes
Of them close friends, which they in turn show
A kindness for him who sits below
'Till their sweet voices a new chord wakes.

And so he will play, and if one ear
Afar or near shall list for the notes
Of his crude song which carelessly floats
From his retreat in the deep woods here,

Shall he wish more, this hermit in gray,
Who passes hours in midst of the pines
Where through the day the sun ever shines
And soft blow the winds of night? Ah, nay!

I

Thou hast been in the land where forever the flowers
Bloom in their beauty through the year's sunshining
hours,

Where the sky in its softness looks down on a scene
That existence uplifts till it meets the serene;
Where the orange and the lemon are fruited with gold
And the zephyrs come far from the sea and enfold
In their chastening freshness the spirit that seems
To delightedly rest in the region of dreams;
Where the vine with its clusters is rich in display,
And the birds their glad carols are singing for aye:
'Tis the land of the South, it is Florida fair
That allures with a breath of its pine scented air
Which welcomes the sojourner with promise to give
The full span allotted man below here to live;
And the hope that it holds for the hearts that would
love

Partakes of the measures in existence above.
'Tis the beautiful land of adventure, romance,
Where DeLeon, the prince, early sought to enhance
The value of being and discover the spring

That perpetual youth to its bathers shall bring.
But he did not find that; like humanity all,
He dallied not here when came clearly the last call;
But he left us who linger with legends, his name,
And that—do you know it?— is the element fame.
Yet whatever there is in the waters that flow
From the sulphurous depths, from the regions below
To develop the joys of a man's earthly days;
We acknowledge the air, like a balm, ever plays
The most magical arts of upbuilding and strength
And existence prolongs to the patriarch's length.
Many thousands have kneeled at its health-giving shrine
And pronounced all its attributes glorious, divine.

II

In this land of the South, off the southwestern coast,
On an island superb, but yet one of a host—
But one of a thousand, which lies calmly at rest
Like a child in its sleep on the Gulf's sunny breast,
Lived a hermit of years just turned thirty, I think
Who'd been here a decade, ever hoping to sink
In oblivion's depths disappointment of youth;
But the more he had thought, the more certain its
truth
That the passion but scotched will its troubles ne'er
cease,
And for things least desired, we perchance have life
lease.

III

In a far northern clime, in a city of note,
Where the ships of all nations triumphantly float
In a commerce the old world looks at with amaze
From out its envelop of conservative haze;—
It was there Seagrave Winthrop was born into a fold
That was said to be builded with blood-gotten gold.
What the dear public meant by this speech to convey
Was this, that Old Winthrop had imperious way
Of gathering his wealth from the need and distress
Of those whom misfortune gave him power to assess,
If a shadow of truth should be found in that—well!
In his home on a street where the money kings dwell
He was all a fond husband and father could be;
At least, his wife bless'd him when the final decree
Bade her go from this world; and he mournfully bent
And was never himself after that sad event.
And, in subsequent time, as years ran their round
He faltered and lingered on the prec'pice profound
'Til a message had sped to the precincts of Yale
And his son had come back, with a countenance pale
With a sorrow at heart, but no moment to spare
For a last grateful look as he brushed back the hair
From the dark wrinkled brow ere the spirit had fled
And his tears freely fell on the face of the dead.

IV

Several things had combined to make Seagrave disposed
To keep clear of the palings which sharply inclose
The favorites of fashion; he was inclined to shun
All men, and regretted such a course he'd begun.
He had heard the reports of his father's vast wealth
And how 'twas obtained, vile inuendoes by stealth
Aimed over his head, until his sensitive soul
Shrank from meanness he felt was humanity's dole.
Still, ambition he had. His desire was to know
All things that a person might be taught here below.
He had plodded through books in a haphazard haste
Which to most men would mean so much time gone
to waste;

But his was a brain built on a plan of its own,
That would strip away knowledge, as meat from a
bone;

While the dull verbiage was forgotten with speed,
Every fact essential seemed on file for the need
Which should call for its use, and what thing can elude
A brain of this make-up when in earnest pursued?
Religion and science, philosophic inquest,
The mechanical arts, each was briefly his guest.
He had reason for this, to himself so he said;
For, probing the doctrine of the state of the dead
Or the future existence of spirit, he caught
At the Brahmic idea as a sensible thought,
To at least the extent that the soul must prepare

By experience full for its sojourn up there
Among the perfected, and if one life fell short
Of rounding out knowledge, it seemed sense of sound
sort

That another would come, and still afterwards more
'Til the gamut was run and the soul had the store
Of instruction and light to enable its rest
To be calm, with its equals in realms of the blest.
And he deemed what he learned would pass never away,
But available prove on the dawn of that day
When necessity called for it to be given
As qualification for place in the heaven.

V

Outside of this theory his heart made an appeal
For the one who since childhood had been his ideal;
Her he would hold perfect, all a woman should be,
Whom he'd claim for his wife when from college toils
free.

And a palace of love rear for her that would swell
Beyond any yet builded by those, who here dwell.
To her he now went, with heart throbbing as true
As any that pulsates underneath the sky's blue,
And he laid at her feet all—all that a man can,—
What he was, was to be through existence's span,
To meet with refusal—worse than that, to be spurned
With hot words that for years in his fervid breast
burned.

Did he think that his wealth, gotten she needn't ask
how,

Was enough to induce a fair woman to bow
To the yoke that he held with so tempting a hand?
Ah, his books? She forgot, what was this to command
Of a place in the circles where she moved and enjoyed
Every scheme by the dwellers in Fashion employed?
A woman who is not a bluestocking herself
Cannot go alone, nor remain home on the shelf
While her husband's eyes follow the desolate page
That embodies dull thinking of one called a sage.
She thought she had feeling, was not cruel to a friend
Of long years, as Seagrave, but their lives could not
blend

More than water and oil, he must see and admit.
Besides, she would say, as the occasion was fit,
That she would be married ere the end of the year
To that charming gallant, Mr. Vincent De Vere.

VI

When young Winthrop sat down in his room late that
night,

For some minutes of thought before striking a light,
He damned the world roundly as a viperous thing
In coil for whoever came in reach of its sting,
And he by the reptile had so often been bit
His blood was discolored by the poison of it,
And if healing there was—any radical cure,

It was somewhere afar, where surroundings were pure—
That is, where the world's face and its people were
new ;

Or, perhaps, 'twould be well all mankind to eschew.
The suggestion, once framed, grew in favor ; at length
It became a command of unavoidable strength.

If his reason had come, as it usually did,
To a problem in doubt and perplexity hid,
He would have found, surely, that the woman was
right,

And that they two were different as day from the
night ;

With minds so at variance they never could line
In a union over which love's full light should shine,
This perhaps would have brought to his mind not that
ease

Which philosophy warrants to disciples whose knees
Are bent at its altar ; for if love is not blind
Its devotees are apt to be weakened in mind
And overlook facts which like mountains expand
To the vision of watchers upon either hand.

We may know not what's best, but we all can look back
And observe where we stumbled on life's rugged track.
And the pitfalls escaped as by some happy chance,
For they never were seen as we made our advance.
And in after days, Seagrave in retrospect saw
Himself but a factor in this great natural law
That what is so, so is best, and the chast'ning rod
Is laid for a purpose by beneficent God

Whose omnipotent power permits naught to go wrong
From fall of a nation to the bird's sunny song,
And a planet o'erwhelmed is no more in His eyes
Than the insect which lives but an hour ere it dies.
Alone man protests, while the beasts of the field
Obedience implicit unto this statute yield.
What tiger or leopard will not fight for its life,
But expire in calm quiet at end of the strife?
And no four-footed thing lacks the courage to meet
• In submissive silence pain or final defeat.
And again, man objects that the right has been cross'd
When some cherished object to his hope has been lost.
All his life, Seagrave Winthrop had this girl in mind
As a beautiful goddess, the best of her kind,
And had climbed to such heights with the ideal he made
That he now was appalled, where the wreck of it laid;
And the scene made him ache, and he wished himself off
From a place where each tongue seemed unloosed but
to scoff.

VII

So he placed his possessions in hands of a firm
To hold and account, for indefinite term,
And soon after departed, he cared not the way,
But the route which he took ended in Florida.
One could never deny inconsistency here;
As he hated the crowd, and he went 'twould appear
Because of the fact that 'twas the popular trend,

And the difference was not very great at the end
Of the well-traveled lines from what had obtained
At his home in the North. He felt naught had been
gained.

The hotels were filled with the fluffings of style,
And dreary nothings the charm invoked to beguile
The hours that hung heavy on their somnolent minds
Which list not to the mill of the gods as it grinds.
Seagrave quickly declared he would now have recourse
To his own company; therefore, buying a horse,
He rode out in the woods. The roads merely were
trails

Which ran hither and yon, among pines, around swails,
Through gloom of the hammocks, and wherever he
met

A river, he forded, getting many times wet.
For fair Florida then was true Cracker all through
And that meant no progress and no effort to do.
The native Floridians, the Crackers of fame,
Whatever their virtues, and the number they claim
With most any people's will compare fairly well,
One is not over-worked, but to satisfied dwell
With events as they are, and they hold it a crime
Without reason, excuse to pit work against time;
For of time they're aware they have all that there is,
And where—where is the man who can say more is his?
There is one thing a Cracker has never allowed,
That is for a neighbor up against him to crowd;
Seven miles is too close, and twenty-five not too far

For the next settler who'd not the first's friendship
mar.

To the visitors who have since those early days flitted
All over the country, has the Cracker submitted
With a philosophy in his inertness found,
And to immigrant thousands with theories profound
Of which blue ruin has been so often the fate;
And to the railroads—but they at first awoke hate
For killing his cattle: then he moved further back
From noise of the engine and from sight of the track.

VIII

Of his trials, Mr. Winthrop didn't need a whole week
To convince him that he must soon some other plan
seek.

The hardships were many; the experience brief
Was sufficient taste of the joyous relief
From the kingdom of men, and a closer contact
With wild nature revealed what he heretofore lacked—
An expansion of soul, an uplifting to light,
Which gave promise of more than was seen on the
height

Proudly rising aloft in the ideal beyond
Where the fates of this world with the next, meet and
blend.

And which way he would turn and what course he
should trace
Came by opportune chance to his ready embrace;

As is often the case as we fumble along
The right is unfolded to prevent a step wrong.
As he rode back to town, a gaunt horseman astride
Of a pony that seemed meanly fed to provide
Transportation for six feet of loose jointed bones
Which made themselves known as Capt. Kendrickson
 Jones,

Said a cordial "Good evening!"—'twas just after one,
And South evening begins soon as dinner is done;
And, lest thereupon you something wrongly imply,
In this country they dine when the sun's in mid-sky.
Captain Jones was one known o'er state's wide extent
As a borrower of truth with a freedom which lent
Picturesqueness quite rare to the tales which he told
Of the sights he had seen and his adventures bold.
He was chatty and kind, and at once opened out
To the visitor he found on this unusual route.

IX

His horse looked like he's tired; had the stranger been
 far?

And had he diskivered what he's looking fur thar?
"Rekeration? I'm beat! You uns do mighty quar!
Say, stranger, want to buy any land around h'er?
Re'kon that the dirt's pore? Let the soil go to hell,
The dirt's not in markit; 'tis the climate we sell!
Wanter look at the state? Well, now, Kurnel, yer can't
By yerself. Git a guide. Wal, thar's old Cypress Lant

He knows all the places—and the game, about it;
Yer obliged ter hav' teams, an' a campin' outfit.
But fur somethin' right solid, I set on a boat
Then it never seems like yer is broken to tote
Fodder fur cattle, fur boats nothin' don't eat
An' critters out campin' like yer men eat to beat.
Whar might yer go? Stranger, anywhere. Thar are
streams
Many more than yer'd count. Hunts of winter day
dreams?
What might them be? The coasts? The west—that's
mighty fine
Way down on the Gulf side—that's below the freeze line,
'Mong the ten thousand keys—somethin' that more'n
sand.
Fur off? Wal, ten townships down below Boca
Grande.
Settlers thar? I don't know of none livin' 'bout thar.
Injuns? I re'kon not—they don't never raise har."

X

As they finished the ride, in the town, on the Bay,
Seagrave asked his companion in Lyman's, to say
What he'd have. He said whiskey, and took it full,
straight.
Then, excusing himself,—he would no further wait
On the Captain's long tale, Winthrop quickly withdrew
For his lodgings and rest, for he felt rather blue,

And he wanted a bath, and a civilized meal,
And also a lotion several bruises to heal.

XI

In that day, you'll recall 'twas sometime in the past,
And Florida has grown in late years very fast,
And in future is bound to grow very much more
As its beauties are known and the unfastened door
To its hospitable climate swings open wide
To the knowledge of those who find comfort allied
With a region away from the snows of the North
When ugly-faced Winter in his might cometh forth;—
In that day, the railroad stopp'd in Jacksonville town
Save a crazy old line which would carry one down
On a time-card that could for no two days agree,
To a place then and now marked on maps "Cedar Key."
In this town on the Key, which appeared as if made
From remnants and leavings, and the builders afraid
It might grow to look decent, but never a sign
Of this thing was observed by young Winthrop, whose
line

Crossed this island of sand drifted up by the waves.
'Twas dilapidation; and the desolate graves
Of the dead gave a cue to the feelings of those
Who survive in their way, and no mourning disclose;
They are stoics, these people, who never will show
Deep affection for friends, nor regret when they go.

XII

He purchased a vessel, a yacht thirty feet long,
Rather broad in the beam, built exceedingly strong,
Altogether too big to be sailed by one man,
So said all the chorus, each one having a plan
Of equipping the boat for a trip down the coast,
And each one of himself as a guide first would boast.
Without asking advice, or revealing intent,
About his own business the man silently went;
Stocked the boat with enough for a year, so they said
Who looked and commented, 'til he wished them all
dead.

A new stout extra sail, a wall tent with a fly,
Sea biscuit in a tight copper box to keep dry;
There were many tinned goods, and a large water cask,
Coffee, sugar and salt; liquors, each in its flask;
An assortment of seeds and a second-hand chest
Full of carpenter's tools; cordage, bars and a nest
Of cooking utensils, matches soldered in tin,
Coils of wire, spades and hoes; and at last he brought
in

His personal baggage, among which could be found
A shot gun and rifles, ammunition, a round
Of tackle for fishing. These embarked, he set sail
With a hope to be spared from the storm and the gale,
And yet never afraid, for he'd handled the sheets
With success many times at Long Island yacht meets.
To his curious friends, he bade cordial farewell,

And they cheered him at last, 'til he reached the Gulf's
swell,
Then they made prophecy, as he turned the Point
'round,
That the boat would be wrecked and its sailor be
drowned.

XIII

The wind was propitious, and he sailed all that day,
And kept on through the hours o'er a moonlighted way,
Until late the next day, in an inlet he cast
In safety his anchor, and slept soundly at last.
After that he sailed days, and laid by for the night;
With plenty of leisure to enjoy every sight—
He'd no destination in especial to reach,
And most willing to learn all that Nature might teach
To a scholar so apt, to whom so much was new
In the life he was on and the scenes he passed thro'.
Now and then he would see a lone settler's house stand
In embrasure of woods on the low-lying land,
But he kept well off shore—he had left man behind,
And wished, for a reason, to see none of the kind;
And if fisherman hailed him o'er wave in voice hoarse,
He answered the greeting without varying his course.
Three weeks of this sailing, from the day of his start,
He got 'mong the islands, as he saw by his chart,
Which his friend, Captain Jones, had talked highly
about.

There he went slowly, visiting scores, but in doubt
Which was best, 'til at last one as round as a ring
Had the one indispensable fresh water spring;
'Twas six furlongs across, and upon the east side
Was a cove where his yacht very safely could ride
From southwest gales sheltered, and well screened
from all sight,

By the wild mango growth that hung over the bight;—
There was timber in plenty, the soil appeared rich,
And here he decided was the spot where he'd pitch
His camp for the future—and the future he meant
Covered not more than three or four months in extent.
'Tis a wisdom divine which lets children of earth
Look back very clearly on what happened since birth,
But prohibits a sight into time yet to be;
For were every event of life opened free,
Few would want to encounter the pain, drink the gall,
In exchange for the joys—joys and pleasures would pall
Until quite valueless, and existence naught more
Than miserable we would pray to be o'er.

If the Jews had foreseen the long wilderness tramp,
Would they for a moment have proposed to decamp
From toils in old Egypt? And could Winthrop have
viewed

His years on this island, he had lacked fortitude
To have entered upon a career of such length.
But a habit will grow, and gain daily in strength
'Til at last it becomes of the subject a part
And severance as painful as a disrupted heart.

What may be expected to be irksome and hard
Will occasionally turn, like the turn of a card.
In a way not surmised, as it did in this case,
When for Winthrop the days ran such riotous race
Of absolute pleasure, that he almost forgot
To his calendar mark, so contented his lot.

XIV

The first trial of his skill was erecting a shack
Thatched with palmetto leaves which he soon learned
the knack

Of laying so deftly as to shed every drop
Of water wind-driven 'gainst the sides or the top.
Then he cleared a small plot, and proceeded to sow
Certain seeds which he watched with deep interest
grow ;

They were quick to respond to the care he bestowed,
And he wondered the more, as he spaded and hoed,
Why it was that these lands of such gen'rous reward
Had never been settled. It seemed not in accord
With orderly nature that the choicest of soils
And climates seem to act, unexplained, as the foils
To a civilized people. 'Twas not so of old,
As we see by the facts which the records unfold
Of Palestine, Persia, Syria, Egypt and Greece,
Where peoples and products had marvelous increase ;
And the time will yet come, when conditions are right,
When this zone will advance to an Edenic height ;

And the smallest exertion of muscle will give
The greatest of blessings for which man ought to live.

XV

Seagrave hunted and fished. Hours and hours he
 spent out
When bright rosy morning flushed the sea all about
With its opaline hues, or the day dying red
Its beautiful color o'er the wide waters spread,
And the scheme of the tints in their varyings held
Him loyal to the empire where he happily dwelled.
And with shot gun or rifle, he wandered away
Over islands and mainland for many a day,
Until the whole country was well known as the rule
Of addition, for instance; for this was a school
Where learning was rapid and each point gained
 impress'd
On the mind with sternness that would fix it there lest
At the instant 'twere wanted. And he grew weather-
 wise
In the currents of air, and the clouds and their size;
Soon was able to track the wild cat or the bear,
And knew where the panther made in thicket his lair;
Knew where 'twas most likely the dread rattlesnake lay
Or the moccasin crawled, the two things in his way
He wished never might come, for naught else was there
 here
For which the hunter need have in his mind any fear.

And he knew where the deer could be found at his feed,
And his rifle ball stopped it even when at full speed;
He could call the wild turkey, and knew where the quail
Or the plover or snipe could be found without fail.
But he cared less for game—for he never sought more
Than enough to supply what he needed in store—
Than for joy that it gave him to be 'mong the trees,
To delightedly drink of the inspiring breeze,
To grow better acquainted with shrubs, plants and
vines,

Which he gathered and studied on botanical lines,
'Til he had an herbarium bulky, correct,
That gave him great pleasure afterwards to inspect,
And, still further, profit, for he readily found
The medicinal herbs which in numbers abound.
All these things gave him life, and a strength brightly
new

Of impassioned soul being, which brought him to view
Much nearer the heaven than he ever had deemed
That mankind could attain in this world roughly
seamed.

And when the night shadows darkly over him stole,
Looking up at the stars and down into his soul,
There was always a voice of immeasurable love
That convinced him of God in the regions above.
And, when weary, he laid on his pallet of moss,
Slept the sleep of the just, and, if dreams, they were
floss

From the distaff of fairy-land fancy, and spun

By the beautiful elves of the flowers and the sun.

XVI

The young man was grateful, when his mind would
revert

To the subject, that he was away from the hurt
Of the speech of his kind. It was more in attune
With the state of his mind to with Nature commune.
Yet he still highly valued the knowledge of men,
And his severance from this he regretted; but then
It was not insurmountable, knowing he could
Stretch his hand to the world for what appeared good.
Four months has sped quickly; as it drew near to May
He snugged up his household, got his yacht under way,
And with southwest winds brisk, before which he ran
free,

He was speedily brought to that place—Cedar Key.
He found there few letters from his agents up North,
Not any one having at the moment great worth.
To Seagrave who'd retired for the time from affairs,—
Statements duly made out about buildings, repairs,
Income and investments. It surprised him a bit
How the credit side grew, drawing little from it.
Then he wrote his booksellers in Twenty-third Street
For some two score of volumes selected to meet
His immediate needs, and thereafter make sure
Of all publishers' catalogues they could secure.
The weeklies and monthlies, the list cut and revised

To what he most wanted, fifty numbers comprised,
Of science, mechanics, letters, medicine, art.
And he patiently waited 'til he could depart
With the packet of books and prints numbering back
To the first of the year, filling full a mail sack,
To the great wonderment of the postmaster there,
Whose experience had naught with this to compare,
And it "beat him clean out how one person could need
A heap of such papers—more'n he *ever* could read."

XVII

Seagrave Winthrop with thoughts of feasts mental,
returned

Against breezes adverse, which the skipper concerned
When they called him to tack; in prolonging the run
And lengthening the journey that was nothing but fun,
For he laid on a sail reading a magazine
When his yacht on fair course to the wind would
careen.

A devourer of books, he had never before
Found them so absorbing as he picked from his store
Here and there, and had time to consider and weigh
What he read. It is true that his later life way
Was conducive to thought and expanding of mind,
To paths marked by others no longer confined.
Down under this fact explanation full lies
Of what traveler's have oft observed with surprise
That intelligent men let their days come and pass

As they happily live, an unique hermit class
Apart, but possessing each a haven of rest
In a forest sublime of the South or the West.
There are few, very few, who can submit to such
Hard and stern discipline. Nearly all men must touch,
Almost constantly, man, and their brain strength
recruit

From the clashing of views and the fire of dispute.
An occasional one in himself is contained
To amuse and instruct, growing rather restrained
Amid fellows of kind, and at last for some cause
He roundly condemns them and completely withdraws
To the seclusion deep of a forest profound
Where the loves and the lights of sweet Nature abound.
When at home from that trip with his first lot of books
He sat down by his hut and felt sure of all nooks
Of the world he could find, wheresoever the quest
None so valued would be as his Isle of the Blest.
And yet to his intellect it was perfectly clear
That another might hold a far different place dear;
Each one has a heaven 'round his daily life bent
If he locates the spot where he lives in content.

XVIII

After this his rough friends, who took liking for him
When they found he possessed courage, courtesy, vim,
Once in every three months saw his blue pennant fly
In Cedar Key harbor, his sole base of supply;

At least, until some six or eight years rolled around
When many new settlers far to southward were bound
Together by railroads which surpassed all belief,
Until finding in fact, to his comfort, relief,
That the steam-cars came down nearly one half the
way,

And he made a new port in the famed Tampa Bay,
And this was still shortened by constructing a line
Through the long, weary stretch of Punta Gorda pine,
And then, like a Cracker born into the manner,
The great world was as near as he cared to scan her.

XIX

He concluded to build a house of his liking,
And he forthwith began by manfully striking
A pine of the forest, and worked on to the end
Through the weeks and the months, taking care not
to spend

Too much of his muscle to let not the morrow
From this day's allotment of strength any borrow.
The trees fell around him, and he hewed with rare skill
The great pines on three sides; when he brought them
to fill,

By block and by lever, each its place in the wall,
They fitted together and, if ever crack small,
It was stopped by the clay which he puddled and spread
That each log might be laid in a durable bed
With final protection against insects and wind.

The stout rafters on top were adjusted and pinned,
Covered tightly with boards, and these overlaid
With shingles which Seagrave from big cedar butts
raved.

Inside he wainscoted with selected curl-pine
Smooth and polished like glass, showing every wave
line

In unequalled beauty, and red cedar in long,
Narrow panels above, with moulding raised strong
Of white bay between each; and the one entrance door
Of oak quartered, in thickness four inches or more.
Several windows for light set up high from the ground,
And a piazza broad on three sides ran around,
Gave a place where he spent full two-thirds of his time,
As one really may do in this seraphic clime,
Where outdoors is the life that inspires and refits
All the worn threads of being in him who submits.
Inside he had furniture and closets and cases,
And odd cupboards inclosed in out-of-way places;
The work skillfully done, not an open joint showed,
The whole lightly polished, like a French mirror
glowed.

He had labored so long, with so ardent a heart,
That the thing of himself seemed an actual part.
'Twas a home and a castle that might easily raise
From a builder in search of the new highest praise,
And to Winthrop a place where he dreamed he might
stay

'Til—he knew not how long—'til perhaps he was gray.

XX

As the years went along, he summed up in his mind—
Made a balance as 'twere of the good he could find
In the life that he led, and charged 'gainst it the bad—
The drawbacks he suffered—always finding he had
A large handsome credit in contentment and peace
Which, year added to year, seemed to rather increase
Than diminish. He felt from the first the warm blood
Luxuriantly course through his veins in a flood
That gave meaning to life, enhancing his pleasure
Beyond anything which the old way could measure;
And he felt rounded out, for both muscle and brain
Had proper allotment of travail to sustain
Them in excellent health, and yet never pushed out
To the limit which they might be strained and meet
rout.

He debated oft times in his mind which was best,
The moments he labored, or devoted to rest,
And he failed to make choice, each was equally dear,
And he believed that in either no man was his peer.
He accomplished so much; he would not have believed
That man in the normal is so greatly deceived
In the progress he makes—in formation of aims
Which leads to achievements founded only in claims
Of the sordid, and looks never further and up
Toward the Being extending the spiritual cup
To the hand that is raised, for the lips that will drink
Of joy whose devotees never falter or sink.

By such measurement true he apportioned his time,
That the hours flew along with the smoothness of
rhyme,

And his brain never ceased the solution of doubts
While his hand was at work in the most menial of
routes;

And, perchance, when he took pen or pencil to write,
His ideas freely flowed, like the beams of sunlight
Which streamed all around him, and he covered the
sheet

With rapidity and very even and neat
In formation of words, yet expecting no eye
Would into his essays have permission to pry.
Still, the whirligig brought him again to the fore
In affairs of the world, and his manuscript lore
Became prey for a bookman, who rushed it to type,
And critical readers hailed each volume as ripe
Production of genius, most remarkably bright
In the statement of facts, for the clearest insight
Into problems obscure, for the arguments sure,
And the form of his text, go grammatically pure;
The range of his work was no less cause for remark,
From theories of spirit where they only embark
Who are thinkers profound, through his "Medical
Pleas,"

With particular reference to new remedies
From South Florida herbs; a thorough inspection
Of chemical agents for certain detection
Of murderous poisons. But he took greater pride

In his novels, in which he undertook to decide
Metaphysical doubts, the relation of sex,
Marriage ties, worth of life, and such questions as vex
Advanced people today. In all this was a fame
He rather enjoyed seeing attach to his name.
'Twas no trouble to write, the ideas fairly seethed
Through his brain, and as free as the air that he
breathed

In his favorite time, in the late afternoon
When he sat on his porch, heard the sea's constant
croon

On the shore very near, and looked into the west
Where the sky was on fire as the sun went to rest
With a marvelous flame full of entrancing change
Which rioted over the whole spectrum's bright range.
What could mortal want more, he would often inquire
To the spirit's uplift and the soul to inspire?

XXI

On one day—'twas in March, and his years on the isle
Had numbered a dozen, with no thoughts to beguile
Back to regions he knew, or to others unknown,
From the beauties which were wholly his own,
As he sat on the shore, on the southwestern side,
'Neath cabbage palmettoes which spread o'er him their
wide

And umbrella-like tops, with his thoughts reaching far
Away o'er the water that showed scarcely a scar

Of a ripple to break the glass's surface which glowed
In the light of the sun that at midheaven rode—
A magnificent scene of a dreamy-like calm,
To which swells on the shore sang an heart-easing
psalm.

It was a favorite seat to which he often came down
With a book in his hands, which were tanned a deep
brown

By the wind and the sun and the work they confess'd
To employ a quiet hour any way he thought best;
A student of Spencer or of Kant, as the mood
Might dictate; or he'd close the typed pages and brood
O'er the quivering leaves which the forest and sky
In their changes would turn to his inquiring eye,
And from which he could read more than letters
revealed

Of the secrets which trees and the earth keep ensealed.
And he sought far away beyond what was in sight
For the ultimate laws of the wrong and the right—
For the qualities called instinct, reason and doubt,
And which play, in the problem of life, in and out
In such intricate ways that they've not been unlocked
To the profoundest mind which for causes has knocked
At the spirit-closed door. Or he merely would gloat
In the capturing dreams as his fancy would float
With the soft cirrus clouds as they feathered the blue
In their multiplied forms ever changeful and new,
Or the tones of the sea which forever unfold
Their translucent blues, green, crimson, russet and gold,

And revealing a path to where spirit could live
At the right hand of Him who such beauties doth give.

XXII

Winthrop's senses had grown very heedful to change,
And he let his eyes now intuitively range
To the westward, and low on the horizon saw
A cloud darkly unfold and, succeeding, a flaw
Of a breeze struck his cheek, and he knew, tho' no sage
That a vicious subtropical storm would soon rage,
And he pitied the men who'd be caught in its path
For escape would be chance from its treacherous wrath:
E'en so the skilled seamen—how much more for those
 strange

To the handling of craft and the storm's mighty range.
With this thought in his mind, the sky blackened,
 clouds roll'd

In wonderful masses, swept around fold on fold,
Which grew denser and blacker, and descending hung
Like an inky pall over the Gulf waters flung,
And there came on the blast the deep, guttural notes
Of rolling discharges from the demon gun throats,
And the waters which lately so splendidly shone
Boiled and tumbled and into a white rage were thrown.
And the trees bended low in the hurricane's grasp.
Seagrave looked on absorbed, with his fingers in clasp.
And his eyes photographed every detail of scene
So well that its mem'ry always lived with him green.

XXIII

He started! What was that? Did he see something,
or not?

Did he dream it or see? Was that white thing which
shot

Like a flash on his sight the outlines of a sail,
Or a mass of sea foam wafted on by the gale?

He sprang up and looked off; pulled his hat down for
shade;

His form fairly trembled, and the briny spray played
O'er him in a torrent. The gale held its fierce breath
For a moment, as stricken with premature death,
And then suddenly swell'd with a redoubled force
Sweeping on with new strength and voice startlingly
hoarse,

Which drove him 'gainst his will to turn backward his
face.

Ah! There it was surely! A real boat, and a race
For life through the tempest, a mere cyclone toy toss'd
In the waters' wild rage. Would it live, or be lost?
Who was it there fighting? Aye, some inexpert hand,
Or he'd reefed up his sail. Could he ever make land?
Not one chance in a score—or a thousand—to save
That craft swiftly flying with its souls toward the
grave.

For, though rightly upheld for the isle by its head,
It would dash a wrecked mass on the shore with its
dead.

XXIV

The hot blood of Winthrop surged excitedly through
His swell'd veins as the boat approached nearer to view ;
He would help, but he felt utter absence of power
And each minute seemed stretched to the pain of an
hour.

But the cockel-shell came headed straight for the beach ;
His heart stopped as he saw—saw a woman's arm
reach

Uplifted as asking God in mercy to spare
From the impending fate. What a picture of prayer !
And who'd venture to say no answer was given?
She believed it, indeed, believing in heaven.
Seagrave shouted: "Let go—let her go—free your
sheet!"

In a thundering voice; but it fell in defeat
In the wild whirling gale, and the sailor no heed
Paid the warning thus sent, perchance knew not its
need.

The next moment his boat, almost touching the land,
Over went. Were they lost? Should a hero there stand
And see two people drown, without making a stroke
In an effort to save? Yet 'twould seem to provoke
Certain death, too, for him. Though a swimmer expert
With a knowledge complete of what powers to exert
In combatting currents, he knew only too well
The dangers which threatened in that dark seething
hell.

XXV

A flash only of thought. He had thrown off his coat
 And stood ready to plunge. The man clung to the boat
 Beating 'mong the wild mangoes where it had been cast,
 And was probably safe for a time, holding fast.
 At that instant a head—'twas the woman's—came out
 Of a wave, and Seagrave took a header; his doubt—
 Perhaps fear—had all gone—gone away on the gale,
 And his only thought now was how best to prevail
 In his fight for that life, for his own, too, no less.
 He had seized her. How? Cared he? By part of
 her dress.

He knew only too well that he could not prolong
 The struggle, relying on tough muscles and strong,
 With such burden in hand, in the awful maelstrom
 Of the rough waters' sweep—they would quickly
 succumb

Save he soon reached the land. They went down with
 the boom

Of a roller that rose like a mountainous tomb
 O'er their heads, 'til his breath seemed to go, and a
 grave

Opened wide 'midst the wrecks which the sea's bottom
 pave.

With giant-like effort he came once more to light,
 Shook the spray from his locks, and in pride of his
 might,

With few conquering strokes reached a tree with his
hand,

Pulled himself up, and laid the limp form on the sand.

He then, with less effort, dragged to safety the man.

"Lie there! Hurt? But alive! I must do what I can
To save this young woman. Oh, your daughter. Fear
not.

What to do in such cases I have not forgot.

If there's life in her heart, I will bring it to light.

Ah, there is, I am sure. I will soon have her right."

He had opened her garments with boldness that grew
From the needs of the hour, and with quick motion
threw

Her across his own lap, rolled her forward and back.

Chafed her arms and her feet in vigorous attack,

And soon saw the effect, as the blood 'gan to flow

And a sure evidence of new consciousness glow.

Then he shouted, "She's saved!" "Thank the Lord,"
the man moaned,

As he raised up half way, falling back as he groaned.

"She must go to my house," said Winthrop. "I'll return

And be doctor to you—give yourself no concern.

Bravely bear with your hurt, with a smile, 'f you may,

Affairs might have been worse—you're alive, anyway."

XXVI

With his burden enwrapped in his strong arms he sped

On the dank, winding path, 'mid the dense growth,
which led
To his home, which—the thought would intrude—would
seem fair
With this woman, howe'er briefly, domiciled there.
Yet he felt inability plans to devise
To ward certain embarrassments which would arise;
But, in cases like this, the one chance of success
Is unfearing advance to final victory wrest.
In the meantime the tempest passed on to the east,
And the rain fell, first slowly, and then it increased
To a torrent through which he hurridly strode
And, almost exhausted, nearly fell with his load
As he came to the haven; but with pleasure he felt
The woman's faint struggles in his arms as he knelt
Intending to lay her on his outdoor settee.
But she sat boldly up when at last to move free,
Gave a glance at her clothes, her bare feet on the floor,
And the blood to her cheeks, he saw rapidly pour.
"This is no time, madam," and his voice was severe,
"To be falsely modest. I am sole master here,
And physician beside. You must do as I say;
Get at once into bed. I will show you the way.
You'll be unmolested. Take off every wet thing;
Use this robe, if you will; in these blankets I bring
Wrap yourself warmly up," and his tone had grown
grim.
"Yes, your father's alive, and I go to fetch him."
His word of command she knew must be obeyed.

Then Seagrave hurried back 'long the path to where
laid

The man who was injured, thinking how he'd sustain
Such a burden in way not to give too much pain;
This was labor, indeed. With a broken leg bone,
Every move brought a pain, which his lips would not
own.

But Winthrop was gentle; got the man on his back,
And with care made each step as again o'er that track
He went home, and at last had the man on a bed.
"You're a thousand percent better off than if dead.
Keep your courage, my fellow; I'll soon have you
fixed."

He never knew, after, how he crowded betwixt
Noon and sunset so much severe effort, and yet
In all things that he did there was not one to regret.

XXVII

The rainfall passed away in its chase of the storm,
And from unclouded sky the sun shone again warm.
The trees sparkled with jewels, while the air purified
Exalted the feelings 'til the spot seemed allied
To the Eden of old, and delightful songs ran
From the depths of the green where the myriad birds
sang.

He found his first patient calmly making the best
Of the circumstances, and taking much needed rest,

And her clothes hung to dry; stripped the man as he
lay,
Rubbed him well, all the while kept his tongue in full
play
About this thing and that, conversation of sort
Which made hours that might drag otherwise appear
short,
And partial sporific the attention to take
From the hurt that the handling compelled him to
make;
Rove long splints at his bench, such as time would
permit,
Put the leg into place, deftly bandaging it
From the hip to the toes, and pronounced the job good.
The victim felt easy, declared that he could
Repay never the debt he had that day incurred
With his heroic saviour. But this Seagrave heard
In displeasure, and frowned; said, to those in distress
'Twould have criminal been had he done any less.

XXVIII

Of a sudden the notion he was hungry came
To the host, and most surely his guests were the same.
And he set about cooking, with lurking regret
For the poverty shown in his larder, which met
Nowhere near his demands; but when supper was
brought
The new comers united in saying they thought

It delicious, and then, by the way they partook,
Gave support to their words, proper praise to the cook.

XXIX

The young lady recovered her spirits and clothes,
Very gay were the first, badly disheveled those,
And her hair in a tangle and crispy with salt.
The disorder she bore, perchance hoping each fault
Was unnoticed by host in the fast gathering gloom,
For no lamps were at hand to illumine the room.
He had refrained on purpose from using all lights
Artificial; this first lovely hour of the nights
Was for calm meditation; he always retired
Ere 'twas late and arose with the eastern sky fired
With its many bright tints, when all life was astir
In the newness and freshness of nature, from whirr
Of the birds 'mong the leaves, to the sleek, watchful
deer;

When man's heart highest beats in the clear atmosphere,
And a plunge in the wave opens wide to the soul
The illimitable realm o'er the earth's lowly dole.
This night, on the contrary, he remained until late,
As he heard Alice Sevrance the story relate
Of their misadventure; how they happened to be
Where they were when the storm awfully tore o'er
the sea.

He knew she was handsome, of a favorite type
With him in the old days; dimpled cheeks always ripe

For the blush that would come—come and go at a
slight

Invitation; her eyes of bright hazel, enlght
With a premonition of what speech would enfold;
And her hair of chestnut, with a hint of dull gold
Revealed when the sunshine would its coilings assail.
But tonight, in the dark, she told simply her tale
In a musical voice, which rose gently and fell
Until Winthrop was meshed in the weave of its spell.

XXX

“You see, Papa and I have been stopping at Myers,
Where man—and the guests there are men mostly—
aspires

To catch the big tarpon, but I think it a shame,
Such a waste of good fish; yet it's fun—they are game,
From the moment they're hooked, they will run, jump
and fight

For the life dear to them, 'til they're exhausted quite;
As they flash to the sun they're a sight to be seen,
Their dripping scales shining in their silvery sheen.
And Papa, over there, did enjoy it so much—
Don't you think, dear Papa, that you've got just a touch
Of what's called retribution? You had no excuse,
For you didn't need one of all those fish for use.
At last, Papa fell out with an insolent guide—

As if one couldn't fish without henchman at side—
But up there at Fort Myers they think none should
cast hook

Without paying some crank to accompany and look.
Then we got us a boat, very one that you saw,
For excursion outside, where we'd make our own law
For a couple of days. It was pleasant. We staid
Till the third—yesterday—when at noon Papa laid
The boat's course for Fort Myers. We had missed
having luck,

When all of a sudden a big fish my hook struck.
'Twas a monster, indeed, and the line outward spun,
'Til Papa took a-hold, by degrees stopped the run—
He stopped running of line, but not so with the fish,
And the boat went along with a regular swish.
Believe me, 'twas exciting; our heads we both lost
In the heat of the race, at extravagant cost.
What direction we went, or what distance away,
When we came to our senses we neither could say.
When we got down to reasoning, began to bestow
Some thought on returning, but which way should we
go?

It was almost sunset, no land was revealed
To the most careful search, though I think each
concealed

The anxiety felt. Papa steered, he thought, right,
But the wind died away, so we drifted all night,
And this morning again by the sun took a course
Which we kept fairly well 'til the cyclone came hoarse

On our track with grim death at its side. You well
know

What came after. To you, Mr. Winthrop, we owe
More than words can repay. It was God sent you there
With your knowledge and strength, with your courage
to dare

In that terrible storm, and for those whom to you
Were no more than the wind which around you there
blew."

XXXI

Winthrop strong and courageous? He there sat to
weep.

He was thankful the darkness would that secret keep.
It provoked him somewhat. 'Twas a weakness he'd
hide,

And he cross'd the floor softly to Sevrance's side.
This move gave him time needed now to implore
A quietness of nerves and his thoughts to restore.
Returned to the woman, said in voice that, tho clear,
Was of such moderate pitch it rang long in her ear,
"It will be a great favor if you will refrain
From referring to that slight assistance again.
It is late now; perhaps you would like to retire;
In that room where you were; a few things you require
And I have, I have put at your service. You'll not
Find there all that you wish; but remember the spot
Was for woman ne'er made. I will be within call
Of your father's wants; let no anxieties fa¹¹

To your lot on that score. I will bid you good night.”
Seagrave soon was asleep; he was thoroughly tired
From the labors which came to the day just expired;
And not even a dream of an angel form cross’d
The region where he was in his weariness lost.

XXXII

When Miss Sevrance awoke, her first thought was
’twas late,

For the sunbeams were playing at check and checkmate
On the panels of cedar; the next what to wear,
And the third was the snarl of her beautiful hair.
The first did not matter; sorry fate fixed the next,
But this scarcely prevented her becoming vex’d;
The third, with much patience, she disposed in a coil
Which she realized went in degree as a foil
For the faults of her dress in which there was no
choice.

As she turned from the mirror, she heard a loud voice—
’Twas Winthrop’s to Sevrance, cheery call of “Good
morn.”

The response, to her fancy, seemed rather forlorn,
And compelled her to hasten; ’twas needless alarm,
For her father’s eyes glowed in a way to disarm
The most credulous, as Winthrop showed his big
catch—

A fish with life lusty, great as one man could fetch,
Whose scales dripping with brine glowed in sunlighted
hints

Of all the revealings of the prismatic tints.
When the breakfast was served it was a model repast;
The coffee was perfect, and its aroma cast
On the air of the room let no appetite fail;
The fish done to a turn, three nicely broiled quail,
A yam baked in hot sand, puffy rolls, and, not least,
Fine fruit from his own trees fully rounded the feast.

XXXIII

Then thy talked. Seagrave found it was pleasant once
more

To hear voices; a woman's within his own door
Was an event unexpected, but none the less glad
Did he hear it and thank the misfortune which had
Cast her lot to his keeping—a woman of sense
With whom conversation had full recompense.
He had duties to do—he must leave them awhile.
He would show her some books, and she time might
beguile

If a volume to suit could be found; opened all
Of the panels which seemed but as part of the wall
And revealed such a wealth of book lore to excite
A more stolid observer; she said she'd delight
To pick over his store; 'twas a wonder, indeed;
If she had them, she thought she'd do nothing but read,
More especially down here, where a person could find
Little else, to her thinking, to occupy mind.

"Select whatever gives pleasure—do not refrain—
Everything's at your service—I say it again."
And Seagrave, with rifle in the bend of his arm,
Was soon lost 'mong the trees. It was not without
charm

To Miss Sevrance to be in this exotic air,
An experience with which she had naught to compare.
And yet all seemed so strange that it lacked of the real,
But an image of fancy which fairies unseal
For favorites who trust them; was this castle a fact
Or a vision that rose on a mind overracked
By the fever that came from the troubles and strain
Of the day that had passed, and a disordered brain?

XXXIV

Alice read not a book, at least, not that forenoon;
She sat down with her hand in her father's and soon
Was conversing of him who had gathered them out
Of the shuddering sea at his peril, and about
His remarkable house, in this far away zone
Where he lived in the depths of its silence, alone.
Was he happier here? Whence he came? When he
came?

Did her father suppose Seagrave Winthrop his name?
Had he met with reverse, and come here to be free?
Or advisable found it to hitherward flee?
Could it be that his record was tainted with guilt?
Had no other been here? Could alone he have built

Such a structure as this? And why built it, and how?
Did genius versatile ever one man endow
With abilities seen in himself and around?
Would an answer to these many questions be found?

XXXV

"Well, my daughter, you might go ahead with surmise,
And echo but answers—information denies.
'Tis not proper, however, that we should forget
We are here as his guests and, moreover, in debt
Very deep to his bravery. Dost know what he did
For us? Shall our mem'ry be treacherous? God
forbid!

When that boat overturned and I crushed 'gainst its
side,

I saw you buried deep in the furious tide;
I unable to move. O, the horrible pain
That wrenched at my heart; when that man plunged
in the main

It seemed worse than useless, but I think that I prayed,
I am sure that I hoped that the courage displayed
Would have recompense. Did it? For when he arose
And so easily surmounted the waves' angry throes,
He brought both to the land. Then just think what
he did,

And he wishes our gratitude stifled and hid.
There he worked on you, Alice, with such earnest
will—

Handled you as a child, with a mother's own skill;
While I feared for the worst, I was almost amused.
At the outset my brain was a good deal confused,
But the rain perhaps cleared it, at any rate I
Found myself ciphering up what I gathered by eye.
Winthrop's a man you can bank on, worthy of trust.
He's both blunt and reserved; do not question; you
must

Let him tell his own tale, if he will, otherwise
We will ignorant remain, and evince no surprise.
It is certain he was into higher sphere born,
And from it by his act for some reason torn."

XXXVI

Miss Sevrance with papa did not always agree,
But his estimate now was near her own decree
Arrived at by instinct, and instinct is above,
To a woman, mere logic, in business or love
And she'll make up her mind on the instant, and true,
Where man, very often, will go floundering through
With his learning and wit, a stern reasoning maze,
And never get clear of the encompassing haze.
But Alice went further, and gave Seagrave a part
In some former unhappy affair of the heart.
What but that, was her thought, would drive man to
deny

To himself all the world? And, without knowing why,
And somewhat to her anger, her sympathies flew

To this man whom her sex so sorrowfully knew.
His house without woman—it must be in a state!
And why idle her time when she might regulate
This household, and aid him? But astonishment rose
Upon finding the rooms would so little disclose
Of want of attention. From the place where she slept
To the kitchen outside, it was perfectly kept
As to cleanliness. But there, of course, were those
things
Which to dwellings a woman's attentiveness brings;
But these not in her province, she to herself said,
As her dimpled cheeks daintily lighted with red.

XXXVII

Yet when Winthrop returned, he could easily trace
Such evidence of that indescribable grace
As belongs to the feminine—a trifling change,
As more aptly the whole she could deftly arrange.
This was second; he first saw the table was spread,
And, in apron, Miss Sevrance was cutting the bread,
And there poised, knife in hand, half expecting his
frown,
And perhaps a strong word might her happiness drown.
He no syllable said, but his eyegleam conveyed
A message that more than her disquiet allayed.
It was one of approval, and of gladness, if she
Read it right. She addressed him "I thought you
might be

Late, and dinner is ready; have I made a mistake?
For, perhaps, sir, you think woman can't broil or bake!"
"That irony's unfounded. On the contrary, I praise
Miss Sevrance here and now. But a remiss host lays
Any burden on guest. Let me show you the fruit
Of the morning's hot chase—a buck deer—noble brute—
There he lies on the bench; and the antlers, I trow,
Shall as a memento to my fair lady go.
But what's of more value, if no error I'm in,
To you, that is—in short—coming back—I have been
To the mainland—I went to the scene of the wreck;
The boat's pretty well smashed, but from under the
deck,
When I brought what was left to the dry land, I drew
What is doubtless your property—this portmanteau.
Very wet, I presume, but the sun's rays cure such
Damage soon." "I thank you, Mr. Winthrop, so much."

XXXVIII

With the dinner disposed of—a dinner that had
Deserved praise and full justice, and Winthrop, reclad
In dress more befitting an afternoon's leisure,
Sat down to receive, and perhaps to give pleasure.
Very soon he grew chatty, and to Sevrance told
Many exploits of hunting and fishing, to hold
The patient's attention, make the hours seem less long.
There were mats on the floor; "that one used to belong
To a tiger, a mammoth indeed for these parts.

Any danger? Oh, no. With their cowardly hearts
They'll sneak into the brush if allowed half a chance;
We have no beasts down here that on man will advance;
The rattlesnake, even, only strikes in defense,
And more often than not waits for serious offense.
And they're few: why, I've tramped o'er the land now
ten years,

And but five times that rattle has rung in my ears—
It's a sound one remembers with something of dread,
The metallic, sharp ring—of those five snakes, four
shed

Their gray skins to my knife; one hangs there on
that nail,

Measures nine feet in length, buttons twelve on its tail.
That bear skin in your room, Miss Sevrance, let me
show

It out here. On that morning, my courage fell low—
Seemed to drop to my boots, for a moment. I sat
In a palmetto shade for a rest, with my hat
Pulled well down. I had cut a bee tree, and had
brought

Of bright honey two pails, which this big fellow sought
For plunder. I heard first the leaves rustle, and then
A dark shadow, the substance close followed, and when
My eye measured the brute, I was wholly bereft
Of my senses. My rifle at home I had left
And now wanted. But there was my axe, and to think
Was to act, and I struck at his head. Quick as a wink,
His paw sent that axe flying; he took me within

His huge arms, and I laughed, spite of fear, at his grin,
'Twas so funny; the hug was more serious. I vow
I can feel his hot breath on my cheek even now.
But I had my good knife—this steel blade—and by luck
It drank his heart's current, with such vigor I struck.
You can see here the knife thrust, and these scars
 remain yet
On my neck where the fellow his sharpened teeth set."

XXXIX

"Don't you think," Sevrance said, "you great danger
 invite
Being wholly alone? Why, an accident might
At any time happen, and with no person by
You would by yourself in this wilderness die."
"I realize perfectly the risk that I run,
But if it differs from what befalls any one
Of the kingdom 'tis only in way of degree
Every man born of woman is an agency free
To act his own pleasure within limits, of course,
Immutably fixed by the Omnipotent force.
And the desire for life is impregnated deep
In all creatures of God that walk, swim, fly or creep;
The more danger threatens, the more strength they
 unfold
To guard 'gainst it, and they when attacked grow more
 bold
In fight for the one thing that is all things to them.

And I, located here on the world's outer hem,
Have employed proper care, and regard it with pride,
For my body, and you for yourself can decide
The result. No philosophy's needed to show
That sickness is useless, and physicians more so;
The one is an outgrowth of man's folly and sin,
And gives birth to the other, who gladly turns in
And helps its promoter along, and at present
Half the world ails; truly, a percentage are bent
To the yoke of congenital malady, and
The folly goes back to some progenitor's hand.
I have kept sound in health, and existence enjoyed
More than ever before; and my spirit is buoyed
By the freedom I feel in my untrammelled acts
With no crowd to dictate—or to follow—my tracks.
But suppose a disaster should, after all, thrust
At my vitals—to all living creatures it must
Soon or late—I believe I possess fortitude
To endure to the end. I should rise o'er the rude
Forest beast, which lies down and in silence awaits
Whatever may come from the all-ruling Fates.
And I fondly imagine that the Paradise
Where mankind's hopes gather as near to me lies
In my loneliness here on this Isle of the Bless'd
As if in some city among thousands I press'd,
With this further advantage, that I'll trouble no one
For their tears, praise, or curse, when my journey
is done."

"But your parents, or brothers, or friends?" said the
man

On the bed. "No remark of that sort ever can
Move my breast. They are dead." "That seems
strange, and so sad,"

Said Miss Sevrance. "'Tis not, after all, very bad.
They went out of the world one by one—I dare say—
Yes, I'm sure, I missed some—'twas for only a day."
"But," said Sevrance, "mankind is gregarious; his place
By side of his kind, to be helped in the race,
And so help on his brothers. Such a life as you live,
Asking nothing from others, with nothing to give
To the world, seems too selfish for one of your mein
And knowledge excelling. You should be on the scene
Of the world's great activities, having a part
In its building and lifting, its science and art,
In its laughter and love, in the sun of its hope,
In its light and its learning—in short, its whole scope."
"Suppose that I grant it; I then, under the rule
Of exceptions claim right to establish the school
Where I study. Those shelves show the world under
bond

To my every request for its learning respond.
Am I doing my share? I don't know. Who can sit
On the work of another and give judgment fit?
Perhaps no one but God; yet the world never sinks
To a modest reserve in the thoughts which it thinks."
This was rebuke severe—perhaps justly incurred
And the man in reply at command had no word.

XL

A few moments of silence, and Miss Sevrance said:
"Far away from the subject of mats you've been led,
And just now I have taken more interest in these;
Won't you tell me what that is, behind your chair,
please?"

"Oh, those are the pelts of the fish eating otter,
The best fur in the south, and the softest by far;
There are six skins in that. Nearly two hundred hides
Of the little gray cat-squirrel in this one, besides
The border of wood rat. In that the fox squirrel—
The *Sciurus Niger*—with the tails that they curl—
The shadow tails proper—o'er their backs to their
nose."

The young lady examined in most graceful pose,
"Shall I find," said Miss Sevrance, "a limit to your
Many accomplishments?" "Oh, yes, Madam; be sure
That on every one's path 'can't' has marked out a line."
Then, the subject to change: "Have you e'er seen
those fine

Soft drawings of wood-life by Gibson, a later
Thoreau of the pencil, whose fond Alma Mater
Is Nature's exhibits of the forest and field?
I have them in books here, and perhaps they will yield
Entertainment a while." As he turned o'er the leaves
He sat close by her side. His breast swelled as the sea's
When the tempest is on. Why was he, the recluse
And the stoic who'd sworn to forever refuse

Influence of woman, to in weakness submit
To the first handsome one close by whom he might sit
In the langorous air of this beautiful South,
Feel her breath on his cheek, see the pearls of her
mouth?

To be charmed by her words falling soft on his ear?
To be chained to her side as a slave to appear?
When it fell on his mind, he grew angry and swore
By the sorrow that came from experience before
It should not occur twice. It were better by far
That between he should place the effectual bar,
So nicely accomplished, of an absence from home.
The woods his resort were, and why should not he roam
From morning 'til sunset through their entrancing
aisles?

'Twere a more noble scheme than be lured by the smiles
And the wiles of a woman—to that which he gave
Erstwhile and in anguish to the dead, and the grave.

XLI

This was what reason said, and he reasoned it out,
As he walked in the gloom, and he never would flout
The result of his logic. Her father soon well,
She would go with him hence. Again Seagrave would
dwell

In the quiet of his home, in its safety and peace,
And this sporadic case of emotion would cease.
Man's reasoning he sometimes believes without faults,

When in each of its members the conclusion halts.
To in other phrase put it, man will not be bound
By that which his reason declares perfectly sound.
But, mind you, I say not reason's finale is right—
It is sometimes as far off as day from the night.
But, if reason allowed, reflex action would oft
Find the better result—instinct, intuitive, soft
And identified scarcely. 'Twas knowing this fact
Led the witty French statesman to advise: Never act
On first impulse, because 'tis invariably right.
But still, I'm not saying, even now, in the fight
For worldly possessions that reason does not beam
O'er mere intuition with a glory supreme;
But only at some points the impressions speak true
Before reason assembles the case to review,
And when finally it does, it is often debased
By the mazes perplexing with which 'tis inlaced.
But be this as you will, I know Winthrop's resolve
Went as mists of the morning the sun's rays dissolve.
To his patient he talked the same night, but waited
With a longing as if 'twas a time to her fated
For Miss Sevrance to come, when, in light that was
 thrown
From the mid-eastern sky where Astarte full shone,
They lived with the poets, from Spencer to Byron,
Quoted from Tennyson, until the environ
Effervesced with the warmth of the heart's ecstasy;
And concluded with Poe's lines of Annabel Lee,
Which Winthrop recited in his musical voice

And gave it a meaning which left Alice no choice
But to think that beyond the mere words that he spoke
Was a memory which had from its slumber awoke.

XLII

And 'twas so the next day; and the day after that,
Until, humiliated, he gave up combat
That his intellect waged against emotions of heart;
While his absence from her gave more of the smart
To his breast than he cared to confess. He was weak
Where precisely he thought he was strong. Did he seek
To revolt? So he said. But then there was the fact,
So embodied beyond denial, of his act—
Like the smoker who says he could quit, but still
 smokes,
Like the bibber, who's pos'tive that when he invokes
Resolution, he'll stop, but who ever adheres
To the liquor that gives transient joy while it sears
The feelings and conscience—and still under the thumb
Of the slavers the victims grow faint, and succumb.

XLIII

She took up the labors, as by right, which befit
One—a woman—at head of a house, and she lit
Every room by the grace of her presence. The two
Worked together in kitchen oft times, and when
 through

With the cares of the house, she with needle and thread
Would intently be mending—his clothes. And he read
At those times from a book for her father—and her.
For her father, perhaps, but *to* her who could stir
To the bottom his passion; he deemed it enough
To be there by her side, and to feel no rebuff
As he looked into her hazel, deep dreamy eyes,
And observed the faint blush that would spring in
surprise

When she saw his devotion. When Sevrance improved
A week after the accident—so that he moved
By the help of a crutch to the porch, then beyond,
The two followed and made a pretention to lend
An assistance not needed; and if by mistake
They got off by themselves, it was all for the sake
Of the schooling thus had—of the knowledge it gave
The young lady who found flowers and trees by
Seagrave

Were deciphered as books; he could utter the name
Of each one in the Latin, and could place the same
By its family and genus. Anon he'd entwine
For the maiden a wreath of the scented jasmine
Or would gather and bind in a sunny boquet
The bright calopogons and blue stars of the day.
These hours held heart's laughter and gave sunshine
of soul,

And the joy they had from it was more than the whole
Of existence. The past so entirely forgot
And the future uncared for, or, if so, as not

Unlike the warm present with its delicious balm
And they bidden to rest in its heavenly calm.

XLIV

To the patient, Seagrave gave attention and aid,
So helpless he kept him on the bed where he laid
For a week. Half that time he cut open the wrap
And disclosed that the hurt was fast closing the gap
Which lay between uselessness and soundness regained.
With continued prudence he might, Winthrop explained,
In four days move a little; in ten he would tell,
As his surgeon, he could go forth perfectly well,
With proviso, of course, he must use every care
And do naught to frustrate the gain each day could
bear.

"And then I would ask you, noble knight, how I may
Get back to the mainland? Have you means to convey
To the port whence I started on that foolish trip?
But I've met with a service repaid by the lip
Very feebly indeed. May the future give chance
To requite the great debt, aye make even advance."

"If debt there was any, 'tis already repaid
By the glow to my house, which your presence has
made;

For, in truth, you are first who has entered and
blest

This home of my building, and a most welcome guest
Though you came to it sadly enough on that day

Of the storm." "It was awful." "The Furies will play
Such occasional pranks in this warm latitude;
But they always give warning; I saw that storm brewed
In the Southwest afar, full an hour ere it showed
To your unpracticed eye; otherwise, when it strode
To a gale you'd have been safely out of its track."
"It is possibly so; but I ever did lack
In deciphering the signs of the weather, and here
It's a treacherous thing." "Well, yes; somewhat, I
fear."

"But a boat—have you one?" "Yes, most surely; I
could

Not have lived in this place without that. It is good
For all uses and safe. When recovered you go
In my charge, to be landed securely, and so
There a pleasure will end." "Do you make that remark
As a mere compliment?" "Not at all." "Then embark
For the world. It would seem you're away from your
place

In so utterly being cut off from the race.
Go with us. I am sure naught would give more delight
Than to entertain you at my home; give you sight
Of the American Athens. I'll guarantee
That you'll have a good time." "I thank you. It suits
me

Perfectly here. A decade and more on this isle
Where the one Master teaches, has taught me to smile
At the follies and crimes upon which the world thrives,
And for which in its weakness it barter its lives.

I have here been content." "Will you tell me what
freak
First induced you to such isolated place seek?

XLV

"For any—for all acts, a man can exhibit
His reasons, but often the case will prohibit
His relating the truth. There are causes complex
And attempt to depict them is only to vex
The mind with insolvable problems. All I say
To you is that 'twas predetermined. This way
I set sail, as did you, and by chance found this spot.
I liked it, and lingered, and finally would not
Give it up, and I builded with purposes leal
And have brought actuality out of ideal."

"But tell me, do you hold a purpose to spend
All the rest of your days here; to here wait the end?"
"That I scarcely have weighed. The event is far off,
Or I hope so, at least. When or where we shall doff
Our earthly rough casing never troubled my brain.
To live right and do right is a creed to sustain
Man throughout the brief day which he's destined to
find

On earth, and he need not o'er the end rack his mind.
Life is decay of the atoms; each moment dies
Some part of the system. When no longer Strength
vies

With Destruction, the heart becomes still, and the
breast,
Sans its burden and cares, sinks forever to rest.
That is all. Death is life, and delightful, unbroken,
Disturbed never more by the word that is spoken
By the savage of earth. I am free to avouch
That with joy when the time comes I'll welcome the
couch
Spread for slumber so long; and where naught
interferes
'Mid a glory profound, and the music of spheres
For ever inviting; and there'll come to my side
All the spirits of those who on earth did abide
In my friendship and love and the æons bedew
With a memory old in an existence that's new."

XLVI

Sped quickly a fortnight; and another week rolled
Into Time's fateful chasm. And at ease in the fold
Of their friend they remained; the whole island
explored,
From the deep mango groves to the waters that poured
From mysterious depths that refreshed beyond wine,
So cool, sparkling and soft, in the midst of the brine.
Their talks took a wide range, in the shadowy lairs,
And if either one thought that another sowed tares
In the field controversial, it passed unobserved,
But the ripe fruits of utterance all were preserved,

'Til each one to the other grew high in esteem.
If the lord of the isle measured out the full dream
Of the maiden as what proper hero should be
'Twas no matter for wonder, as you will agree.

XLVII

But at last, Sevrance said in a tone positive
In the charm of the place he no longer would live;
Its entrancements had held, and he'd long overstaid
Decent limits, and now duty must be obeyed,
Or his business would go to the bow-wows, or, worse,
His executor might undertake to disperse
It, believing the principal dead. Would their host
Take them off on the morrow, to Myers on the coast?
Thus enlarging the debt which already had grown
To size so colossal they scarcely dare own.

XLVIII

With reluctance, Seagrave gave assent. He felt
Culmination drew near, when his visions would melt
Into vapor and go, or grow real. It meant much
To his heart and his soul. Did such deep feelings touch
The loved Alice Sevrance? Was he fool, not to know?
Was he deaf to a sigh? Was he blind to the glow
Of her deeply lashed eyes, which so oft met his own
That she censured herself for the boldness thus shown?
He went slowly at work making ready his boat

With confusion of mind, and a dryness of throat
From musings entangling o'er what manner of phrase
He the subject should broach. Should he utter the
praise

Which arose to his lips every moment he thought
Of this woman whose charms to his heart hunger
brought

A macarian rest? He determined, forsooth,
Just nothing save this, that he would tell her the truth
Before parting; and so he returned to his hall
Whose ceilings would echo never more the soft fall
Of her foot, or her songs. Would the silences be
The same and as restful as they were before she
His retreat invaded? He knew well they would not,
And he dreaded already the gloom of the spot
When this girl should have gone. He with will force
assayed

More of cheer than he felt. The last night that she
staid

Should, if he had the power, be so happily spent
That around it their thoughts should forever be blent.

XLIX

He succeeded, at least with the maiden, beyond
Any hopes which he had. Still unable to bend
His mind to a programme, the events moved along
By chance of occasion, from reciting to song,
And with stories of life, 'til the evening expired

Leaving much to be said which they would have
desired.

Sevrance told them a tale of a journey he made
When a boy to the west, with the first to invade
California where finding of gold had set wild
A whole continent wide, 'til the eastern born child
Even wanted to go to shear part of the fleece
That the pockets would fill, and show still an increase.
There were hardships enough over mountains and
plains,

Where he broiled in the sun and was soaked by the
rains,

And at last he hurrahed with his feet on the shore
Of the swift flowing stream where he dipped for the ore
That eluded his grasp—it was always ahead
Or to one side, but never where he chanced to tread.
There were mud, wet and hunger for this Argonaut.
But the pennyweights few of the metal he sought.
And he no exception; for to one who found gold
And could keep it, a thousand grew haggard and old
In the mad, reckless strife, or succumbed to the break
Of their glorious dream. Sevrance pulled up his stake
And came back to the East, where the law would
provide

An influx of nuggets which the West had denied.

L

Then the young people sang several vivacious songs,

Her soprano ringing as a voice that belongs
To a proud cantratrice, and its echoes returned
From the dark forest walls, 'til the soul of him burned
With the fire of its thrill; and she felt that his eyes
Through the gloom looked at her with a warmth that
gave rise
To a blush, and she trembled. Then a silence fell
On the two, and it held them enwound in the spell
Of the wholly indefinite. Sevrance asleep
In his chair left the vigils the others to keep.
Alice whispered: "'Tis late." "Aye, said Winthrop,
"You see
Those stars—it is Hydra—o'er the top of that tree?
When they're there in this month, 'tis past midnight.
I'll sing
You a song, if you please." "Do. A farewell to bring
This last night which we spend on your isle to a close.
We long since should have been, I am sure, in repose."
With brief hesitation, as if he would make choice,
He began in low key, but with sonorous voice:

LI

My Heart Goes Where Thou Mayest Go

O with the hour of parting near
I would one whispered word bestow
To say when thou'rt no longer here
My heart is where thou mayest go—
My heart goes where thou mayest go.

And Ill remember all these days
Which thou hast made so quickly flow,
And where thy life and what thy ways
My heart is where thou mayest go—
My heart goes where thou mayest go.

And silent will my castle be,
When it thy accents does not know,
But thou shalt live in memory—
My heart is where thou mayest go—
My heart goes where thou mayest go.

And darkness here shall henceforth reign
In halls illumined by thy glow
But symbols of these shall remain
My heart is where thou mayest go—
My heart goes where thou mayest go.

The forest paths will lose their light,
The flowers less beautiful will blow,
And hope alone will live as bright—
My heart is where thou mayest go—
My heart goes where thou mayest go.

O with the hour of parting nigh
My words fall falteringly and low,
I for the future breathe a sigh—
My heart is where thou mayest go—
My heart goes where thou mayest go.

LII

The last note died away; and the maiden was gone—
 Fled in silence and swiftly, as some startled fawn
 At the sound of the huntsman. She felt her heart beat
 With excitement and fright, as she made her retreat
 Without saying good night. And the song's refrain
 kept
 So repeating itself that 'twas long ere she slept.

LIII

Sweetly slumbered the town 'neath the low April sun
 In reserve that befalls when the season is done
 And the anglers are gone. And the fishing boats
 moored
 Near shore or at anchor, and the yachts were immured
 In close canvas covers. At this hour the broad breast
 Of the river was crimsoned with fire from the west;
 While in border of black, 'long the low shining bank
 Showed the palms and the cocoanuts in inverted rank.
 The wind which had been strong all the day and gave
 speed,
 Fell away with the sun to a zephyr, indeed,
 With occasional flaw, and Seagrave's whitened sail
 Idly flapped, and then drew. They heard never a hail
 From a seaman abroad—there were now none afloat
 Save thsesse three from the isle, in their long, lazy boat,
 Which scarce held its dull way in advance of the tide.

Sevrance made effort slight his vexation to hide,
Yet Winthrop put forward a true seafarer's skill
In endeavor to draw his sheet so it would fill.
Since the first light of morn and the earliest bird's
 song

They had been on the way and all day rushed along
'Til the water rolled up and came over the side;
And for them hours flew quickly, for either one vied
In utterance of thoughts each deemed might be the
 last—

Or they feared it, perhaps, and the future would cast
Far asunder their paths, and in each throbbing breast
Were deep longings evolved which were not yet
 express'd

Through softened tone and electric glances intense,
Conveying swiftly ardent love's intelligence.
The sun, red and swollen by refraction of light,
On the planet's brim poised and then dropped out of
 sight;

And above, as the stars appeared one by one clear,
Seagrave turned in his boat and made fast to the pier.

LIV

At the town's sole hotel, they had dinner late set,
Which they relished, and seasoned with their jokes,
 and yet

There was dread undercurrent of low somberness
Which each one strove in turn, but in vain, to suppress.

Can the heart say farewell with the ease that the tongue
Will issue the mandate, and be by it not wrung?
Somewhat later, in brief as they sat on the stoop,
Sevrance told of his wreck to an inquiring group.
Was informed by mine host that his effects were safe,
And retained for the day of return of the waif;
Then few questions revealed that a boat would depart
On the morrow for Trabue and Sevrance would start,
Not dismayed when all said it was weezy and frail,
A concern good enough for the government mail,
Up and down thrice a week the irregular line
Of the coast. Said Sevrance: "Though it may not
be fine,
We will take it because 'tis the best at command,
And we cannot at slight inconvenience now stand."

LV

Seagrave turned to Miss Sevrance: "Would you like
to go
For a stroll on the street? The attractions I'll show."
The attractions of Myers! But Seagrave did not draw
Her attention to them. She remembered she saw
The stars shining above, and the blue hemisphere,
And the wavy outlines of the trees 'gainst it clear.
And, when far up the street, from the city away,
They, arm in arm, halted underneath a sweet bay
And listened a moment to the lamenting call
Of a lone whippoorwill that came up from the pall

Of dank timber which fringed the low bank of the
stream.

Oh! These tropical scenes, they live long as a dream
In a mind which partakes of their balmy delights—
The velvety softness of the star-lighted nights
Oft oppress'd with perfume of the lemon and lime
The magnolia and orange, and the white cape jasmine.

LVI

Half in shadow they stood, as entranced with the scene,
Then to his companion Winthrop said most serene:
"With Miss Sevrance compelled on my island to dwell
I refrained, from that fact, from advancing to tell
What has burned in my mind and welled up in my
heart,

Yet determined to utter it ere you depart.
Here in Myers, where you are, as it were, on your
heath,

I can speak, and I say from the first that beneath
The sang froid which I tried to maintain there has
been

A hot passion of love, vexed with doubts could I win
One so sweet. You must take me, I fear, as I show,
As I could, I have been as I am. Only so
Would I have you to know me; and add, I have not
Always lived in the wilderness, nor have forgot,
Or I trust not, the ways of the world which I left
And unto which I, if of this hope not bereft

Shall return, for I would never have you to think
That I any woman I would marry would sink
In seclusion so deep. May I hope and believe
That the love which I offer you'll harbor and weave,
Alice sweet, in your life? Ah, thank God for the way
You uplift your dear eyes. Oh, they do not say nay.
While the future again holds the charm of the past
And life has a mission and a splendid contrast
With the selfish pursuit of a hermit to keep
In a pretense of virtue and o'er the world weep.
Ah, this night is to me a new heaven, I feel
And I'll put on thy brow of my purpose this seal."

LVII

"Mr. Winthrop, I know that a woman should save
All her words in reserve, though her warm heart may
 crave
In its passion as ne'er a man's dares to, I ween,
But I could not say aught in this hour that would mean
More to you than you've guessed; and to say we'll be
 pleased
To see you in Boston whenever you've ceased
Playing recluse down here." "That were easy, I'm
 sure;
The events of this night have for that proved a cure."
"For my papa has said very often of late
That no other one thing would his feelings elate

As to have you for guest." "And did Miss Sevrance
say

A word on the subject?" "She will now, if she may,
Tell you 'twould delight her." "Then indeed I decline
Not, and come—let me see when—I'll drop you a line."
"A line, Mr. Winthrop?" "That is figurative, quite;
With permission from you, I will hasten to write,
And write often the news from the seat of unrest,
For such, with you absent, is the Isle of the Blest."

LVIII

At the house, Sevrance saw at the first glance he caught
Of the love-lighted eyes which his daughter had brought
From her walk was convincing—he needed no word
To explain the affair, and when later he heard
From the maiden's fresh lips the sweet news, saw the
shine

In her beautiful orbs which was almost divine,
It affected his heart, and he told her she'd won
A man of royal stamp whom he'd take as a son
First of all whom he knew, and none less she deserved;
But profoundly his first thought in silence preserved;
Though he had due regard for the parental bands,
He was glad it was settled, and she off his hands.
Was there ever a man of his consort bereft
Who did not entertain for a daughter thus left
Wholesome fear, and rejoice when in answer to love
She accepted a man of whom he could approve?

By the side of his wife is a man in contrast
In the method of making a mould for the cast
Of the lives of their children. There's nothing of size
In the world like the motherly self sacrifice
In aid of her offspring. No love of another
Begins to compare with the love of a mother
'Tis so pure yet intense, of the seraphic strain,
And endures to the end without falter or wane.
And of hardship and toil she will take no account
If thereby her children are enabled to mount
In careers that are useful to place in life's field—
And her recompense is in a heaven unsealed.
'Tis the boys of their teaching who have become great
As the leaders of men and the builders of state;
'Tis their creed that's been carved by the sword and
the pen,
And the world is in debt to the mothers of men.

LIX

Though the people had gone, as 'twas said, one staid
yet
From the tourist crowd lost, perhaps not with regret.
A dark, low-statured man, with hair midnight in hue,
And regular features so pronounced that they drew
More than one look, and black eyes with sinister tricks
Of superbly flashing, but which no gaze could fix.
This one stood just outside as Seagrave early came
For a walk out of doors contemplating to tame

His high spirits; his thoughts at the time far afield,
But this man blocked the way, and with insolence
steeled,

Held place in the passage. "'Tis Winthrop, I believe?"
"Yea, believe it, and know." "Memory does not deceive
Me oft in my acquaintance." "Well, what futher
would you?"

"You this morning are curt. Did late hour in the dew
Chill your system?" he spoke; ere the last word escaped
He sprawled flat on the sand, lying there, for breath
gaped.

"'Twould doubtless be hopeless undertaking to teach
Such a puppet as you to be civil in speech."

The other stood upright, said, as he brushed the wet
From his clothes: "'Tis a plain case of assault."
"A threat?"

"Not a threat; just the fact. I intended no wrong.
I'm not known, that is plain; it's not strange 'tis so long
Since we were at college; yet you should recollect
The one whose career and graduation was wrecked
By your virtue o'erbearing—an unwarranted blow."

"Not forgotten, Dave Dyke; but why now should you
grow

On my sight once again?" "Perhaps so as to tell
That I'm no longer dunce, but have prospered full
well."

"Why, then, so much the worse. What by your kind
is gained

Must, of course, be by fraud and by devilishness
stained."

So marched Seagrave away, and the other's clenched
fist

Was shaken in hatred, and he serpent-like hissed :

"Oh, I'll pay you well out. You know little the power
I possess, and by which can be wrecked your high
tower,

Oh, heaven, make it hell. And the woman will help
And with complaisance will hear you as punished dog
yelp.

Winthrop of old held his head above fellowmen,
And has not since changed. So did Lucifer; but then
He fell, and will this one. Thousands have brains as
big

As those under his hat. I the power have to rig
Forces of Belzebub to away sweep the earth
From under his feet, and to show him 'tis not birth,
Books, nor wealth gives strength. Perchance he would
not succumb,

Coarsely fed, coarsely grained, and to fine feelings
dumb.

And do I the brute want? Far less risky for Dyke
To make use of the woman, and him through her strike.
Much more sensitive she, with nerves not so concealed;
And when under influence she quickly will yield
And do what she's bid, and thus Winthrop's I'll show
How kindness to his love will repay for that blow."

LX

Mr. Sevrance came down, running straight against Dyke.

"What, the devil, you here?" "I am here, but don't like The abrupt word you use." "Indeed! what brought you here?"

"Perchance pleasure, or business. It is nothing queer For one who has funds—and—time—to take a brief run From the cold of the north to this land of the sun. And I lengthened my stay on discovering your track, And being informed you would probably be back— I felt sure you would be me delighted to meet."

"But I'm not, and I charge you to be most discreet And be absolute stranger, 'til we are away."

"Who is the young lady?" "She's my daughter."
"Don't say!

That you were so favored, I was never aware.
I should like the acquaintance of woman so fair."

"Oh, impossible that!" Such word's not entertained Between friends such as we are. Tell the truth, I'm pained

That objection you have. Should I make the demand I perchance hold the card whose play would force your hand.

Let the lady make choice; I will not ask your aid,
Of the outcome I'm sure I will not be afraid.
But your fingers keep off. We can't fail to agree,
And you fairly can urge no objections to me."

Then he turned on his heel, leaving Sevrance to swear,
"What a scoundrelly cuss, doubly damned, and he dare!
My impression somehow with a subtlety trend
That the beginning is here of this comedy's end."

LXI

When they went the next morning to the steamer which
lay

At her moorings at end of the frail timber quay,
Winthrop saw, and he frowned, that his enemy there
Had arrived, and was fixed, with a debonnair air,
In a chair at the stern, where the awning gave shade
From the sun which was out in full splendor and made
The air quiver with heat, scarcely modified by
The zephyr that threatened every minute to die.
He had said ere the start his most tender farewell
And express'd the fond hope to hear ringing the bell
For their wedding full soon. Now he could only see
The poor comforts were hers for the trip on the sea
Which the small boat afforded; annoyed and surprised
At foreboding distrust at the way Alice eyed
The dark man, and her words: "He is handsome. Do
you

Know his name?" "Yes, and no. But his name—
there are few

On the register now—I most certainly saw,
And beyond that I wish to know naught, for I draw
The conclusion 'tis safe to avoid him because

He's a rascal; if eyes ever showed up the flaw
In man's morals, his do." "You're not jealous, I
hope?"

"Not a bit." "Truly so?" "Truly." "There goes the
rope."

"Call it line on shipboard. Well, good bye, once again."
And Seagrave jumped ashore as the boat felt the strain
Of the wheel's revolutions, and stood on the pier,
Watched the steamer far down, through the clear
atmosphere;

The flutter of ribbons, then the small starry flag,
And these lost 'round the Point, he still watched the
long drag

Of black carbon that came from the pitch pine
employed,

And which far astern floated and thinly deployed.

Then he slowly walked back through the lone street,
his mind

Still on Alice, and felt even now the hard grind
Of his loneliness; got his boat's prow to the west,
And drave down with the tide toward the Isle of the
Blest.

LXII

On the ship the dark man, near the mouth of the
stream,

Stretched his arms and arose, looked around, threw
the gleam

Of his eyes on the girl, but her father addressed:
"This trip tires the patience." "Oh, somewhat, but
we're bless'd

That we have any boat." "But this really is vile."
"There are worse ones, no doubt." "Yet a shame to
beguile

A traveler on this one. Is that Winthrop who came
To the boat with you, friend?" "Do you know him?"
"I claim

A long standing friendship, and in college classmates;
But he knows me not now—more than that, says he
hates

Me in sight." "Very strange." "Unexplained. I
forgive

Him—well, call it a mannerless act. Does he live
In this section?" "He does." The sharp advocate's
wits

Were alert. Here a case must be guarded from its
Ex-parte evidence. Yet he wondered his friend
Knew this man and owned not. Still, no Sevrance
must lend

Information which Winthrop himself would have told
Had he wanted it known, and which now might unfold
To his possible hurt, and they owed him so much
They must count possibility in what might touch
His affairs. This man now had advantage enough
And Sevrance must meet him without offering rebuff;
So they chatted along about water, and air,

Birds, snakes, climate, trees, soil; praised the settlers
who dare

Break the forests to make themselves homes. Not the
two

Held the talk, for the magnetic traveler drew
The young lady, almost 'gainst her wish, to partake
In the colloquution. But her interest awake
And engaged once, she found an agreeable man
Of the world who could say airy nothings, and ran
In a melliferous stream on and on, and held her
'Til she argued, in shame, if this one she'd prefer
To Seagrave, nor explain the ill thought when she tried.
Well dressed and good mannered, with an air that
implied

He belonged at the front of the best social line.
His glance gave commination she could not define,
But she could not resist, or did not; at heart sick
For submitting to Dyke, yet urged on by the pique
Held toward Winthrop because he'd not freely explained
What relations to him this strange man has sustained,
Instead of evading, or, as she held, denying
He knew him—biting her lip—it was lying.

The conversation ran on; the steamer as well.
At the landings they gazed—Punta Rassa, Sanabel
And Pine Island; at last, and about the hour due,
They in safety debarked at the wharf in Trabue,
Punta Gorda elsewhere, which looks over the spread
Of broad Charlotte Harbor, now purple and red,
Crimson, lilac and gold, a most beautiful sight

In the sheen of the late afternoon's bright sunlight.

LXIII

In the cool morning air, when the dew spread around
Like a rain over night for the grass and the ground,
And the ozone was free to give vigor to life,
The blue jays were a-wing, and the mocking bird's fife
Shrilly sounded, our three traveling people had place
In the sleeper northbound at no hurrying pace
Up the Peace River Valley, Sevrance would have had
Mr. Dkye remain back; still he was a good pad
Now to knock up against for a couple of days,
Through a low, level land which so little displays
To interest awaken, and Dyke, what so his make
Was decent acquaintance to the tediousness break.
But he did more than this; he made haste to improve
The occasion, without stepping out of the groove
Of propriety strict. Neither bashful nor bold
He succeeded, ere reaching New York to get hold
Of the maiden's affection; he was asked to call,
And the girl realized her mistake ere the fall
Of the word, but the strength of this stranger's will
force

Overcame her and she felt like wax in the course
Of formation by moulder; she shuddered in dread,
Yet constrained to remain by the glamor which shed
Fear and liking at once, like the light which allures
The frail moth from retreat, tho' it sings, ne'er cures

The inquisitive fault; save too deep in its breath
The misguided insect flutters down to its death.

LXIV

(Mr. Winthrop to Miss Sevrance)

"DARLING ALICE:—The days by the calendar are
Counted not as they were ere thou, bright northern
star,

In my heaven arose, and the light of thee shone
So all that was splendid theretofore in my zone
Grew dark and disheart'ning by the vivid contrast.
Now the days drag along with my thoughts ever cast
On thy beauty and grace, on thy goodness and love,
The attributes all of favored angels above,
And I long for the hour when I'm bid to thy side
And the word shall be said which will make you a
bride.

House and island the same; nature's features as dear
As they were in the past when thou entered my sphere,
Or so reason declaims; but they do not so seem,
And that happy time past appears only a dream
Of impossible things, while I am now awake
To the diviner phases of the life which thee make.
All the verdure's unchanged, and the nightly dew
weaves

Its garlands of diamonds round the edge of the leaves
And Golconda rivals when the sunbeams first flash

From Aurora's bright brow and her swift brushes dash
With such color the east; and when evening draws
nigh,

From my door I behold many purple threads fly
In and out and across the quadrant's crimson-rose,
And the horizon's gold fringe fades, falters, and grows,
All these colors reflected, 'til the Gulf's placid breast
Seems a pathway that leads to the ultimate rest,
Colors that when together oft fastened our gaze
And in vain we sought adjectives wherewith to praise.
They're the same as they were, but they're changed to
my view,

For my fancy paints now fairer, warmer, each hue
With the glow of thy love. And my books are all here,
But they're touched not nor read, and the pages once
dear

Have surrendered their charm, and another divine
With a tenderness holds every thought which is mine.
I hourly behold thee in the downy white folds
Of the soft clouds which o'er the cerulean sky rolls,
And I feel thy eyes glow in the stars of the night,
Which above me, thou knowest, are wonderfully bright;
And thy voice ever sounds in the wind which comes o'er
The waves and the forests, greeting me at my door.
Have compassion, I pray thee, for the havoc here wrought
In the life of this man whose affairs are distraught
By thee, beauteous maid, and whose salvation will lie
In thy early demand that thy affianced fly

With the speed of the wind—for his sails must be
spread—

To thy side in the north, and the word shall be said
That will make thee the wife of a mortal thus raised
To the happiest state, which the apostle praised.
Let me hear from thee soon. Next to seeing thy face
And enfolding thy form to its merited place
On my passionate breast, that must answer; a kiss—
Very many, I send. O no single one miss,
And a myriad more for thy lover please save,
And believe me sincerely, in love, your

SEAGRAVE."

LXV

Sleeping Boston. The sun in midsummer array
Had started the thousands to woods, mountains and
bay,
And in fashion's Back Bay, blinds in darkness were
drawn,
Save occasional place where the folks would not fawn
On these edicts, or had other reasons as good,
Who kept their home comforts which they well un-
derstood
Could not be found 'mid crowds at the summer resorts
With the gossiping throngs and the lounging cohorts.
At all events, Sevrance was at home, in the toils
Of the legal profession, with its onsets and foils;
Up a winner one day, down the next in defeat,

But, whatever his luck at the bar, in receipt
Of not too modest fees. Of all things he abhorred
'Twas to be by the public a cheap lawyer scored;
And he argued if men would rush into the law
'Twas a luxury for which they their purses must draw.
And Miss Sevrance at home, with a cousin remote
Of her father's, a blonde, slender, tall, whom you'd vote
Of line queenly, so proud was her way, and her tread
Firm and regal; blue eyes large and bright, and her
head

Stately poised was adorned with a crown of rich hair,
And a danger lay hid in its tangling lair;
If in friendship she bent, yet her sympathy held
No close confidences which so ardently swelled
In young Alice's heart, blind to blushes, which raised
As she talked of her hero, and his courage praised.
Yet, if truth must be told the fair Geraldine's brain
Held much broader culture and of classical strain.
She found way to contribute as her friend sat to write
The first letter of love to her far distant knight,
Curbed the frankness which Alice could not restrain,
Threw in a suggestion of a Sappho refrain
Which compelled Winthrop's pause, and he rightly felt
sure

That 'twas foreign to her; would she stoop to procure—
To purloin, in short? The suggestion once made,
Tho' he scouted at it, yet it rankled and staid.
But 'twas justified quite to fair Geraldine Snow:
If he half met the praise he was one she would know,

And there sprang in her mind what she dare not give
speech—

That if Winthrop should come to her presence she'd
teach

Some things worth the knowing which surely would be
Harkened to by an innocent from a lone key

Far from women; he might know his books as a sage;

But to feminine charge full as weak—as a page

Of Dean Howell's. And she doubted never her style

Would make capture; if not, that her tongue could
beguile

While Miss Sevrance would think what 'twas better
to say.

And, besides, was she not here to be in the way

Of these lovers—this loving? Her mission was real.

What is love but a trade?—in it nothing ideal.

LXVI

In the meantime, the dark Mr. Dyke had appeared

At the Beacon Street house; and if Miss Sevrance
feared

His black eyes, as she said, 'twas a fear modified

By a charm undefined when he came to her side,

And she could not resist that which she should repel.

And she said to her friend, as the softened light fell,

In their chamber one night after David had left:

"What—what power has this man? Is it some wicked
weft

To be shot 'cross the warp of my life, and to spoil
All the future? He seems like a snake in a coil
Getting ready to strike, and I shudder. Again,
I'm attracted, and feel a luxurious pain,
'Tis so queer a commingling of joy and distress.
At times, tho' he's absent, his power comes to oppress,
Like a deep shadow, spread as a pall o'er my soul,
And I'm beckoned thro' gloom toward a desperate
goal."

MISS SNOW

"Oh, you poor, nervous child! It is only a trick
Of an overwrought brain. Surely, none would I pick
From the hundreds of men as a gentleman born
Before this Mr. Dyke, who would probably adorn
Any circle haut ton. If your lover can match
Him in manners and looks, you have made a good
catch,

And I bless you again as a woman whose luck
Is freed from the evils of a mischievous Puck.
But I'd not be surprised if to Boston he came
He would seem like a bear really hopeless to tame."

MISS SEVRANCE

"Mr. Winthrop is noble, so learned, and so brave."

MISS SNOW

"Oh, yes! Our lovers must be that always to save
Their position. Each girl must some male from the
race

Make selection and raise to a heroic place

In her own mind."

MISS SEVRANCE

"You laugh."

MISS SNOW

At the folly our sex
Ever shows when a man takes occasion to vex
Us with love."

MISS SEVRANCE

"You talk wild. And have never you known
What it is to be loved?"

MISS SNOW

"Yes, indeed. I must own
To a dozen affairs of the kind. So you see
That the story is worn pretty threadbare with me."

MISS SEVRANCE

"Are you joking?"

MISS SNOW

"Don't cry, O my Alice; forgive.
No. I should not have said what I did. Let love live
In such breasts as it may. Here's a kiss for good night.
May your hero still be of your dreams the delight."

LXVII

But Miss Sevrance's sleep was not sound, and her
dreams
Most depressing. In one she was crossing deep seams
And rough ribs and scoria of a bleak lava bed

Whose rent fragments, sharp edged, bruised her feet
till they bled;

Not a tree, flower, nor shrub, showed itself in the glare
Of yellowish green heat that swept down thro' the air.
She limped, choking, along, when a wide fissure gaped
From which up came a form that appall'd her. 'Twas
shaped

Like a man, yet no man. It had horrible claws,
Tigerish eyes and a mouth like a viper's. A pause,
And the voice of Dyke spoke: "You are welcome,
my dear;

But I claim, first, a kiss as a mark of good cheer
Thro' this damnable place." As his claws the flesh tore
From her shoulder, his lips, with foul breath, to her
bore

Such a kiss,—like a sting. She awakened and screamed.
And exhausted then lay in a tremble, she deemed
It so real; and for days she was haunted, depressed
By this incubus weighing like a sin in her breast.
She grew haggard and wan, wished for Winthrop one
hour

With his courage and strength, and his good sense
to tower

As a bulwark around her; the very next, fear
He would scoff and despise with strong words that
would sear.

So, all of her letters limped along on a crutch,
Saying less than she would, lest she might say too much.

LXVIII

In a third story room on a South Boston Street,
Where the tenements crowd 'till the lines of them meet,
Where the people spend all, and their poverty feel
In a district, in short, called the shabby genteel—
In a low darkened room, sparsely furnished and mean,
Mr. Dyke calmly sat facing angry John Dean.

MR. DEAN

"Dave, you must get to work, and the girl, too, you see?
You can't put the burden altogether on me.
I do my share—always; and you know that—enough.
Both of you'll have to hustle in moving the stuff."

MR. DYKE

"We must wait yet awhile."

MR. DEAN

"See this coat? Will that wait?
Why a tramp would be poor who affords not its mate."

MR. DYKE

"Oh, your clothing's not bad. Money soon will be rife
In our camp, when that girl becomes your servant's
wife—
'Twill be heaven and cash, and our ship will be in,
For her father is rich."

MR. DEAN

"But it is not her tin."

MR. DYKE

"Yet you bet he'll come down when I catch hold his
leg!

From scandal of that sort an excuse he will beg."

MR. DEAN

"Well, go it! God speed you. God? 'Tis Devils that
keep

Watchful care o'er your life, if awake or asleep."

MR. DYKE

"Well, whichever it is, things at last will come right,
As they have in the past; and the sun will be bright
By and by, tho' the present is shrouded in gloom."

MR. DEAN

"But, 'tis said that a wrong will at last meet its doom."

MR. DYKE

"They are relative terms, right and wrong, as the stand
From which you look at them; either one will expand
Without limit, if brought into favorable light.

That a living is due every man as of right
Can't be gainsaid, and each has his own way to get
What is only his own. One in this spot may set
Under motion his plans, the next there put his stakes,
And each is entitled to whatever he makes."

MR. DEAN

"What in thunder, I'd like to inquire, do you want
Of a woman as wife? She'll make trouble and haunt

You away from this trade."

MR. DYKE

No; she never will know
What profitable seed we here secretly sow,
Or her conscience might wake if it escaped my clasp."

MR. DEAN

"Is the game worth the risk. Do you think you can
grasp
Enough money to pay for the danger?"

MR. DYKE

"If not,
The whole thing long ago would have been sent to pot.
And you know very well I can drop her the day—
The next day should I choose. 'Tis an opera bouffe
play.

While the money is sure, still beyond that I hope
A man will toboggan down the slide which I soap.
There's a proud, measley wretch who in mere meanness
hath

Made attempts several times to put stones in my path,
And I'll laugh when he squirms on the confines of hell,
As he looks back to see by whose tripping he fell."

LXIX

A woman's perceptions are wonderfully quick
When the trump is a heart and a marriage's the trick;

And Alice was second to no other in this
Special faculty—these insights which never miss
Fire, and true in their aim. So she knew that this man
Would seek culmination of his audacious plan
Before many days passed; and would she still remain
The same helpless being, with head ache and heart
pain?

Was it love of the dang'rous in this that led her
To grope round for the black when the white she'd
prefer?

Had she lost self control? Could there be no appeal
From the will of another to what she might feel
Was her own proper way? And was she in a daze
To be blindly led thro' a dark intricate maze
To—to—where would it end? She was lost in the doubt
Which encompassed her soul like a damp fog about.
She then halted 'til Dyke, with his art in command,
Came and knelt at her feet, pleading long for her hand,
Spread the future before her a Paradise fair
And they the two bless'd ones to be entertained there.
'Twas all a dim glamor what she said—what she did,
But she felt her strength come with her tears as she
hid

Her shamed head in her hands, and sobbed back she
could not

Hear him further, and said let it all be forgot,
For he never—no, never, could any hope find.
For himself, Mr. Dyke kept his presence of mind
And his temper, and spoke a few words to assuage

The turmoil that appeared in the girl's brain to rage;
Set his voice to low key, with pathetic regret
That a passion so single as his should have met
With reception so—well, so indifferent, at least;
Poor requitement for love which no moment had ceased
In its growth since he first found it spring from the
seed.

Would she think it all over, and the uncommon need
He was in to be saved, and she easily might
By returning his love; and he left with good night.

LXX

When alone by herself, she was angry first,
Then, excitement still high, she her writing desk burst,
Drew her paper and pen, wrote, with spirit and dash—
She scarcely knew what, but it bore more of the flash
Of her own proper self, the recipient thought,
Than any from her that to his home had been brought.
And Alice strange freedom for a little while felt
As if she had risen to a clarified belt
Of pure air where she breathed with the ease as of old
Before stifled by Dyke with his suave voice and cold
Glittering words, and alone she could write as denied
With her friend Geraldine sitting close by her side,
As she always did sit when the other would write;
But the girl from this burden had respite tonight.

LXXI

“MY DEAR SEAGRAVE: My love seems to take brighter
phase

As it springs out the dullness, the darkness and haze—
The wretched environs into which I've been thrown.
How it happened, don't ask; the fault may be my own;
I don't say; I don't know; all my thoughts are in strife.
But tonight Mr. Dyke asked if I'd be his wife—
Mr. Dyke, your old friend, he at least claims the post,
Tho dislike for him grows 'til it seems I'll be lost—
In the spell that he weaves. Will you set your boat's
prow

To the northward at once? Will you come to me now?
When I need you, aye, more than I did on the shore
Of the Isle of the Blest, where your ample arms bore
Me from waters of death; for of death I was not
In the least bit afraid. But to think I've forgot
For a moment your love, as I must if the man
Had excuse for his coming. I'm sure that I can
Endure not, and I cry 'cross the earth and the sea
For my lover from far to come soon unto me
And resolve threatenings dark which now hover around
To a sheltering care in which love shall abound.
Geraldine—or Miss Snow—has this evening gone out
With papa; now on that you may surmise or doubt
Till you are tired, and I could never help you a bit,
For I can't make my mind up to what is in it.
But I'm glad she's not here while I have this to write,

For she says many things which are witty and bright
Which somehow I borrow, quite unconsciously, too,
And realize later the folly. Do not you
Abhor this confession, and the confessor more?
But I further can't write; I expect at the door
Every moment to hear the night key in the latch
By the tenants returned. I must hasten to catch
The collection last made from the letter box near,
And expect a good scolding when Miss Snow shall hear
I write with her absent. I have written so fast
It may be hard to read. Think! The die is now cast
And may panoplied fortune and pleasure advance!
Ever and ever your true love,

Alice Sevrance."

LXXII

Seagrave needed no time to get ready to start;
At Punta Gorda his yacht in the care of Joe Smart,
A rare boatman, he left, when he read the last line
Of the letter which came; the previously blind sign
Which was scrolled on the walls of his house became
plain

And, sans all preparation, he'd take the first train,
Replenish his wardrobe on occasion or chance,
And he'd sharpen meanwhile the long blade of his lance
For his enemy's head; for the more he reviewed
The letter he'd folded, he its import construed
To be not in the lines which his Alice had writ,

But between them, and he guess'd she never would fit
The effect to the cause, but was lost in the dark
Of some villanous scheme which Dyke's kidney could
hark

To the onset against what was sacred and pure
Without scruple. But Seagrave would go with a cure
For ulcer of that sort. "I will never," he said,
"Be content till Miss Sevrance to safety is led,
And a net for that rascal be woven. Perhaps—
Geraldine—there is something about her which taps
My suspicions. I have little ground for the thought,
But momentous results have from smaller been
wrought."

LXXIII

But he turned from the worry, his lesson was learned
Long before to not borrow of troubles interned
In the future, for surely they might be concealed
So securely as never to light be revealed.
However, if such should develop, why the need
Would be served by nerve-force, husbanded for the
deed.

As he pass'd, he preferred to o'erlook the landscape;
On the state's growth to reflect, from low Sable Cape
To the mouth of St. Johns, which a brief time had
changed

From interminable forests thro' which cattle ranged
And a rare Cracker camp, to a settled estate

With its clearings and groves, happy people elate
In their homes 'mid the flowers where the year blandly
smiles

In fruitage abundant, and all nature beguiles
To a long life of pleasure; below an earth fair,
And above a blue sky and a marvelous air.
Towns and hamlets by scores struck his eyes as he
roll'd

Thro' the country, with schools, and the spires of
Christ's fold,

Hotels and court houses; a devout multitude
Having plowed what so lately was wide solitude,
Far away from old homes, but yet not feeling lost
With their many railroads and their diurnal post.
They were people of brains, and invaders in peace
Who came for contentment and to gain a new lease
Of life and enjoyment in the sun amid flowers,
Where zephyrs are soothing, and the redolent hours
Waste away as in dreams when the fairies troop out
In their garlanded robes to lead spirits about
Under orders from Mab. Here they'd planted the vine,
And beneath their own fig trees could sip of their wine
Thro' the days when the sky was of soft glowing pearl
Or at eve when the sun in the west would unfurl
The bright variant banners, delighting the eye
With the colors belonging alone to this sky;
And surrounded by groves of the lemon and orange
Whose gloss'd leaves and gold fruit make a picture
for range

Of man's gladdened vision; the broad ananas fields,
Bananas and guavas, and a score more which yields
Beyond an abundance. If all this had been done
In a decade, he thought, 'twas a victory won
Having parallel none, and the future outheld
With a generous hand a cornucopia swell'd
For the thousands by tens who should have happy
homes

In this land of the sun where the snow never comes,
Where the foliage is soft and the blossoms are sweet,
And Athena, blue-eyed, prolongs life from her seat
On Olympian hill; and the hopes of the day
Melt the dreams of the night in a blessing away.
This was better, he owned, than the solitude kept
By himself on the isle which so peacefully slept
In the translucent sea; yet each man to his will.
The intelligent folks who have come here to fill
The broad land with a fruitage were building a state
To be marked in years coming as prosperously great.
Solitude they'd not bear as he did. They'd prefer
To rub fellow elbows, to meet men in the stir
Of advancement and strife and activities strong.
So did he. But his trials he'd insist did belong
To the domain of healing of body and soul;
He'd been broken in both and was emerging whole.
And who'll say, after all, what is noblest and best
In mortals by millards who on earth have made quest,
And for what? The beyond is a Magnalia, blind
As is that whence the seed sprang to grow in its kind.

What law-laking Egoist to bind would assume
The mind of another, quench the lights which illumine
The life, brief as an hour to a chiliad? None
Have secrets exclusive from what life's web is spun.
Are the many or few justified in a claim
Of right over the one? Why, history must name
One alone in the walk of progress who has led
Earth, and the multitude nameless went with the dead.

LXXIV

Thus his mind was engaged. But the prosaic side
And disquiet of Seagrave Winthrop's late summer ride,
He found in confinement to the hot rumbling car,
With the powdery dust from its pounding and jar.
It bore on him, the change from the air clean and free
And the silences deep of his isle in the sea;
And the loud talk of men 'bout their cattles and hogs
Was to him the miasma afloat o'er the bogs
Intellectual. Here, when the summer months grow
The train service dies down to a few cars and slow,
But when once he had caught the fast northern mail
train—

A long distance runner with a speed to maintain—
He felt as if going, he pass'd state after state,
And on reaching New Jersey, he had counted eight.
He stepp'd from the sleeper to the old ferry ark
Which conveyed him the Hudson across to New
York,—

The great city whose noise and confusion and lights

Struck his ear like a Babel and revealed the sights
Which astonished. "Ah, me, 'tis no wonder," he said
"That half of the people never know the life led
By the others." Between city life and the far
Distant stillness of country, with little to mar
Virtuous life, there's a gulf very deep, very wide,
And if each has its dark, it has, too, its white side.
Which is better? one asks. The discussion's as old
As the building of towns. Every person can hold
To the theory he likes; but there is no dispute
That the cities would die if they did not recruit
From the vigorous blood of the country, the brawn
And the strength, to be thrust in unpitying pawn
For wild gain; for the city's a mill that runs fast,
Grinding up flesh and blood, with scarce aught at the
last

But scant grave for the bulk of its toil-driven slaves
Who're sustained by a false stimulation which saves
From remorse. Still, 'tis great in some ways, not the
least

In its contrasts extreme, from the millionaire's feast
In his palatial home near the grand Central Park
To starvation and filth where the alleys grow dark
With dense population in their tumbledown shells
And life is but suffering a succession of hells;
From the nobles of wealth who administer true
What is put in their keeping, to the accursed screw
Who, like all the others, bids farewell to the earth
As much of a pauper as he was at his birth,

For Charon never carried across his dark pool
A stiver or sixpense—think of that, dying fool!
From sealskin, silk and lace, and perfume of rare cost,
To cheap calico gowns; from my lady engross'd
In society's whirl, to the sempstress who knows
Day nor night from her drudgery the slightest repose;
From churches uptown never entered by God
Nor whose people have ever pass'd under the rod,
To the widow who weeps in a damp corner dim
With the angels around bringing comfort from Him.
Then the question recurs, where does happiness rest?
And whose name shall be first when Humanity's
 bless'd?
Shall then Crassus be crowned? Shall the tramp be
 a king?
Shall Magdalene's finger bear honorable ring?
He pondered these problems with results rather scant—
They well would have puzzled a Fichte, Heigel or
 Kant—
As he rode in his cab; still unraveled the snarl
When at last he got out at Hotel Albemarle.

LXXV

Without any delay, he a messenger sent
For a long ago friend, Mr. Farrington Bent,
Who came that same evening; tall, broad-shouldered
 and stout,
With a masterful step, as if he'd pick a route

And pursue it regardless of what might it block,
And in friendship or fight equally ready to lock,
If his gray eyes spoke right. But his manners were
mild

And engaging, almost, like a precocious child.
Shaking hands warmly, Seagrave proceeded to tell
In a short, hurried way of his vacation spell
Which had kept him away. From this, quickly he
turned

To the subject in hand—to the one thought that burned.

MR. WINTHROP

"Farrington, let me ask if you're still in the same
Old profession engaged?"

MR. BENT

"Yes, the same hunt for game,
And, what's more to the purpose, I find it—sometimes."

MR. WINTHROP

"I want your assistance."

MR. BENT

"Well—in my line of crimes?"

MR. WINTHROP

"I don't know. Perhaps not any crime has been done;
Proof is lacking. I'll tell you, and you can keep run
Of the story. Your help for past friendship I ask,
With a guarantee that you'll be paid for the task.
If a wrong has been done you're the man who can find

The rascal who did it, and the snare weave to bind.
There's a woman—'tis said there is one in each case
Where a man is concerned."

MR. BENT

"Yes, of course; or the race
Would from the earth perish."

MR. WINTHROP

"You're facetious, but I
Am deadly in earnest."

MR. BENT

"That's all right; and I cry
Back to you at this sport. But I'm bound to be heard
Since it Adam commenced—Adam, villain absurd—
'Tis the fashion for men to attribute their sin
Or its cause, to a woman. There's nothing within
Expression of language to characterize right
These miserable sneaks who would get out of sight
Behind feminine skirts. Why don't sometimes men
raise
Themselves up to Truth's plane, and their voice to the
praise
Of womanly virtues? If no better were she
Than the average of men, I am afraid the decree
Would be end of the world. I am tired of the lie
That the women to men every evil supply."

MR. WINTHROP

"You have well said your say. I'll agree to agree

With your utterance strong. If you'd waited for me
To in half dozen words end of my sentence reach,
I'd have lost an essay, and you—well, saved your
speech.

There's a woman involved in the case I present,
As lovely a creature as the Fates ever sent
To accompany man on his journey mundane,
Whom I've plighted my love, which she returns again
With devotion as warm and as pure as the light."

MR. BENT

"Ah, indeed! Will you please name the beauty, a sight
Of whom dazzles Seagrave? Before whom he would
dance?"

MR. WINTHROP

"Don't extravagant grow. She Miss Alice Sevrance
Of Boston."

MR. BENT

"I would tender you joy, with the hope
That the future will give you a pleasure whose scope
Shall be limitless. But all you so far have told
Does not reach to the pith of the subject."

MR. WINTHROP

"A bold
Rancous rascal comes next, whom I'm compelled to
place,
From what little I've read of this fad folks embrace
As a hypnotic fiend. I could vanish his spell
O'er the girl, if a spell he has woven. But 'twere well

In my mind to look out if he's not bigger game—
If some prison wants not on its roll this same name.
That chap I am after. Late last Spring he was south
On the Caloosahatchie—at Myers, near its mouth,
And a while afterwards there were found in the town
A score counterfeit bills, which had been scatter'd
round.

The proof really is slight that he left the notes there—
I'm obliged to admit for with you I'll be fair—
But one dealer was sure that Dyke gave him this bill
On the National Bank of the Upper Minkskill."

MR. BENT

"What, this bill? Why, Seagrave, if you've put me on
track

Of the gang which makes these, your acquaintance will
lack

Not a journey to jail, for to you it is due
To deliver to me the first valuable clue
In a case which confounded the force. But his name?"

MR. WINTHROP

"It is Dyke."

MR. BENT

"To me strange. But it may be the same
Is assumed."

MR. WINTHROP

"No indeed; but he may have a score
Besides this, which is right."

MR. BENT

"I have followed for more
Than a year—nearly two, I should say—on the trail
Of this bill, working hard, and doomed ever to fail."

MR. WINTHROP

"That is queer, for this Dyke was too stupid to scold
When at school, he as dull as Abderean of old;
But a natural thief, he his lessons would steal
And, exposed, was dismissed without any appeal."

MR. BENT

"They're the kind who evade the detective's pursuit
The longest."

MR. WINTHROP

"Why is that?"

MR. BENT

"I don't know; they do it
As though ignorance were shield, but when they're
at last found,
The detective, because he has not run to ground
Such a dullard before, is provoked at himself.
But I hope I've a point to land Dyke and his pelf.
It is now ten o'clock. In an hour I will start
For Boston. Will you go?"

MR. WINTHROP

"I think not. Any part
I might play over there would suspicion awake
And defeat the measures you may prefer to take."

I will write on this card names and numbers to aid you to start. If I can be of help when you've made A survey of the field, send a message by wire. At this house I remain."

MR. BENT

I your calmness admire.
Good or bad, I'll report. But I hope it will show
Something else than defeat. Time is passing, I go."

LXXVI

O Justice, heaven-born, works salvation at last.
And it signifies not if the unjust have pass'd
Tens or hundreds of turns where the law lies in wait,
It is finally met, whether early or late,
Whether God's law or man's, it its vengeance complete
Will measure to culprit, and know never defeat.
And tho' sometimes man's law one a failure may deem
For awhile, 'tis not freedom, for God's law supreme
Will admit no escape. But it generally haps
That the artfullest sinner will somewhere make lapse—
The Fates, after long guiding thro' criminal maze,
Will finally desert their poor victim, and gaze
From their vantage on him when involved in the toils
Which he wove for himself, and they smile as the coils
Draw tighter around him. Mr. Dyke had arranged
For action for certain on a Wednesday, but changed
It to Saturday. Why? He did this surely not

To permit Mr. Bent to arrive on the spot.
For Bent did not arrive, he, at least, was not seen.
He argued with wisdom that belonged to the dean
Of the detective branch of the government force
That tho' not knowing Dyke, Mr. Dyke might, of
course,
Be on him, so he took two good men who were strange
To the East, and gave them charge of finding the range
Of his game. And of these, one, O'Neil, the first day
Saw Dyke go to the Beacon Street house, go away
Shortly after, and tracked him thro' rushing and roar
'Til he entered the South Boston tenement door.
Then a second beheld; in ten minutes a third;
And this latter he knew—was nicknamed the Fly Bird—
From a picture which hung in the gallery of thieves.
Then he saw softly turned on the third floor the leaves
Of a blind, and felt sure he was on the right scent
Of the quarry, and left to make report to Bent.

LXXVII

Events moved for the Sleuth, for O'Neil the next day
Followed one of the men o'er a tortuous way
To Charlestown—a house where the shutters were dark.
"That's the place," uttered Bent, "whence our friends
will embark
When we call," after he had considered the facts.
"They are foxy; their pals even know not the tracks

To that house over there, where we'll find that they
turn

Out their work; in the other, and without concern,
They live safely, and meet whom they will; after this
I will be over there. You, O'Neil, never miss
An hour's watch in the day; get a room on the street
Where a view you can have. When a rag or a sheet
From a window is hung, or a pistol shot sounds,
To the rescue then come. We must keep within bounds
And exercise patience; perhaps days—perhaps weeks—
We must circumspect be. Give South Boston to Leeks;
He to you will report and speak never to me.
You in this room alone must ever I see.

LXXVIII

That same night, Mr. Bent, when the silence hung deep
Over Charlestown, and tired people all were asleep,
Made his way up the steps and, selecting a key
Which threw back the bolt, he entered softly, as free
As an owner in fee; passed thro room after room
With the rays of a bull's-eye dispelling the gloom,
And found—in the basement—what he deemed he would
find,

And was satisfied quite, at least in his own mind,
At the progress to date. In the front second floor
He found, upon opening with his false keys the door,
A room dark in its dust, which was surely not used,
And he laid down and slept, where he was not refused

The sweet, easy slumber his own bed would afford.
After rising, and lunch, he, with sharp augur bored
An inch hole in the floor and the ceiling below;
Then sat down by the window to wait for hours slow
To roll by. Thro the blinds' narrow slits, he could view
What was passing beneath. There were only a few
People seen on the street, but the watcher ne'er showed
Disappointmmt or hope, nor appeared tho he owed
Aught to time, or against time had debt. If his mind
Was kept busy, as 'twas, one no flushings could find
Of his thoughts in his eye—every muscle was tame.
But at last his face lit, as two men briskly came
To the door, entered softly, went promptly down stairs,
Where at work they began, entirely unawares
That their movements were followed by eyes full as
keen

As their own, for an hour; and then Bent having seen
What he wished for, withdrew, and retired to his room,
Threw himself on the pallet and slept till the gloom
Of the evening allowed him to make his retreat,
And his faithful lieutenant in conference meet.
They agreed on one thing—any time they might choose
They could tighten the lines, but as yet they would lose
The bell wether. They'd wait yet awhile, but alert
To the needs any hour might them call to exert.

LXXIX

But this case, for a wonder, moved along, didn't stretch

Nerves or patience. Next day they saw Dyke come
and fetch

Ladies two. "Now," said Bent to himself, "I shall hear
If not see," and he sprawled on the floor with his ear
To the hole he had bored, and was gladdened again
To discover that sounds from below came up plain.

MISS SEVRANCE

"Where are we? What this place? Geraldine, do not
leave

Me alone with this man. Why, I did not conceive
That you'd help to deceive me, for where are your
friends

Whom you said we should meet?"

MISS SNOW

"You are aware of the ends
Which we seek."

MR. DYKE

"There! No more in that strain; now go out
And your important errand please hasten about,
While I to Miss Sevrance can the better explain."

MISS SEVRANCE

"What! You're locking the door?"

MR. DYKE

"Yes, so we can remain
Undisturbed a few moments."

MISS SEVRANCE

"What, what does this mean,
Mr. Dyke?"

MR. DYKE

"Pray be calm. Here, unheard and unseen,
I again press my suit; at your feet humbly kneel
And implore you to give me an answer."

MISS SEVRANCE

"You deal
In soft words and harsh acts. You your answer shall
take.
No! Never! A thousand times No!"

MR. DYKE

"Please awake
To the fact that you're prisoner here, and your heart
You must yield—or your hand—ere you ever depart,
And I'm sure you'll prefer any trouble to save."

MISS SEVRANCE

"Back! Back! Come not near me. Would you kiss
me, vile knave?"

MR. DYKE

"Have a care of your words, my sweet one, or you'll
find
That I can be somewhat,—when provoked,—say,
unkind,"

MISS SEVRANCE

"Oh, why did I know you? Mr. Winthrop was right. You're a wretch."

MR. DYKE

"Ha, ha! Winthrop, indeed! why this fight
Is against that same man, who aloof held himself
From those better than he—got, as 'twere, on the shelf
Of his pride, and the top one at that. Will he laugh
In his joy at the news that you're my better-half?"

MISS SEVRANCE

"Oh, never! God protect."

MR. DYKE

"I would not contradict;
For I think you mean yes. Miss Sevrance, this conflict
Of tongues shall have ending; we're to be married soon,
When returns Geraldine—'twas to be just at noon."

MISS SEVRANCE

"I would die first."

MR. DYKE

"Ah, Death does not come at our call.
It is when we don't want him he throws somber pall
O'er our heads. But you see, do you not, worse than
death
Looks you full in the face, for suspicion's low breath
Is as bad as the truth when the truth is the worst;
By your own guilt undone, you are already cursed,
For an hour we have been in this room all alone—
Don't you see what I mean?"

MISS SEVRANCE

"O my God! Am I stone?

Yes; I see and I feel. It has been, knave, your aim
To put this upon me, and to blacken my name
Oh, death I would welcome; yes, a thousand times yes,
Than to live and as woman be any the less,
As united to you I would be. Why, I scorn
The thought. Did I slumber; was it of the dark born
That this rottenness here once a caddis goodness
gleamed—
Was with manhood endowed?"

MR. DYKE

"I declare, if you dreamed,
You're awake to the honor approaching."

MISS SEVRANCE

"You think,
It may be, it is noble to here on the brink
Of a precipice to set me. Perhaps you have power
To my body impale, but the soul seeks its dower
Far beyond and above. Think you answer'll not make
To the vengeance of Him who will never forsake,
As I firmly believe, such vile criminal's trail."

MR. DYKE

"There, stop! I insist. Think your words will avail
To change my decision, when I've gone to this length?"

MISS SEVRANCE

"O father! O Winthrop! O my God, give me strength

In an hour of such need!"

MR. DYKE

"Oh, now dry up those tears,
Or your eyes will be spoiled. Here Miss Snow
reappears,
For I hear carriage wheels; 'twill be over soon now,
And wisdom it is to the inevitable bow."

LXXX

Mr. Bent at the blind slipped his handkerchief thro'
And walked noiselessly down and the front door bolt
drew
And admitted O'Neil. Neither uttered a word
As they stood for a moment and low voices heard
In the parlor; then both threw their weight 'gainst
the door
Which went in with a crash that astonished the four.
"Hell, 'tis Bent!" exclaimed Dyke, and he made a wild
dash
As escape he would make. The big man like a flash
Was upon him, however, with grip of a vise
In which he was a child, and as ribbons of ice
The irons circled his wrists. But the second man
fought
In a desperate way, until finally brought
To a Quakerish mood by a harsh temple blow
From O'Neil, just in time to return to Miss Snow,
Intercepting her exit.

MR. BENT

"No, madam, you must
Remain with your people for awhile. I can't trust
You away from my sight."

MISS SNOW

"You're impertinent, sir;
Let me pass."

MR. BENT

"I cannot. 'Twill be dangerous to stir."

MISS SNOW

"What invasion is this? I don't know what it means."

MR. BENT

"'Twould take time to explain."

MISS SNOW

"If there's cause for the scenes
You have made with these men, you have not the least
cause
To give me detention."

MR. BENT

"It accords with the laws
We make for our guidance; and this beautiful pair
Of silver steel bracelets I shall ask you to wear."

MISS SNOW

"Oh horrors! Arrested! You're mistaken, and do
You, oh, you vile creature, believe I'll yield to you?"

MR. BENT

"I dare say. There's the proof; they fit snugly. O'Neil
Will you step down in front while I hold these folks
leal

With revolver, and tell that Jehu not to wait;
That our plans have been changed; you will return at
eight."

MR. MILLER

"Will you be kind enough now to say why I'm detained,
This indignity thrust upon me, the cloth stained
By these desperate acts?"

MR. BENT

"Oh, you innocent man?

It is my place to get what information I can,
But I have none to give."

MR. MILLER

"'Til you're called on to answer
For imprisonment false."

MR. BENT

"You will soon need a fan, sir,
If with folly you heat. Name your church.—Oh, your
tongue
Has no lie ready-made for a question thus sprung?"

LXXXI

When O'Neil had come back to his chief's side, then
both

Of the men, and in spite of resistance and oath,
Were searched thro with dispatch, and made sure they
were fast

Each in separate room; after which Bent, at last,
Gave notice to Alice, who had set as one struck
With a dumbness thro'out the brief struggle, her pluck
Dissipated, her cheeks being ashen, her eyes
Lifeless, evincing neither fear, hope, nor surprise,
Nor in the drama going on the least interest.
Had she come in few weeks from the golden-tinged
crest

Of high hopes to this trough of despond? Aye, and
worse,

To, still blameless of that, be put under the curse
Which would follow henceforth every move which she
made

Until dust came to dust and her body was laid
In enwrappings of clay; and for him who had brought
Her to look upon life as mosaic inwrought
With such beautiful gems—would she dare with this
stain

On her garments, assume to look ever again
In his eyes, or allow her ears open to hear
His reproaches? Indeed, could she ever appear
Unto him, or the world, or herself, as she did
To within briefest time? And her father—she hid—
Her first movement—her face, as she felt the dull ache
Of an overtired heart. Blessed love does not make

Second place for a parent, tho' a new flower should
grow

More sublime by its side and its blossoms should show
Brighter colors, new forms, yielding perfume which
seals

The eyes and the senses to all save sweet ideals.
But more, the affection which had grown thro the years
Between father and daughter had—and had caused
her tears—

Seemed to wane on his part under Geraldine's reign
As a queen for the realm which she labored to gain.

LXXXII

With her thoughts at this stage, Mr. Bent seemed to
find

Time to give her attention; in words firm and kind,
And so loud that Miss Snow could not help hearing all.

MR. BENT

"Miss Sevrance, permit me, if I may, to recall
From the dark, cloudy realm where occasion has
thrown

You without any thought or of effort your own;
You are safe where you feared, for a witness has heard
Since you came to the house every syllabled word,
And besides, what will gladden your mind in this hour
When the elements strive and the night shadows lower,
Is the news that I give you that Winthrop is near,

That the message is gone which will bring him soon
here,

For he waited without, as it were on the skirt
Of this dramatic scene, lest his presence should hurt
Our plans for the capture of the people entrapped
With such ease in this place, and few more will be
wrapped

In the arms of O'Neil, my assistant, who's gone
To South Boston to see if a prize may be drawn
That will match one we've got herein under our thumb.
I regret very much that I cannot give some
Relief sooner to you, but precaution must use
Against any escape to the street of the news
Of this event, lest those whom we're after elsewhere
Should get wind and evade us; the chase has been rare,
And I cannot afford any change of the plan."

MISS SEVRANCE

"Can't I send to father?"

MR. BENT

"No; O'Neil, sooner than
Any message, will reach him."

MISS SNOW

"I ask you again
If enabled you are this affair to explain?
Why is it I'm subject to this outrage, abuse,
And the gentlemen, too? Have you any excuse
To offer?"

MR. BENT

"Not the least, madam—here. Proper time
Will arrive, say tomorrow, when the alleged crime
Shall be inquired into."

MISS SNOW

"Crime?"

MR. BENT

"I beg you don't start."

MISS SNOW

"Crime? Crime? Do I hear right?"

MR. BENT

"Yes."

MISS SNOW

"You think you are smart."

MR. BENT

"No; but rather I thought in the months on this case
I was frightfully dull, and the outrageous race
You have run me, I'm sure to your credit shall stand
When I gather together this numerous band—
Will you tell me how many there are?—You are still.
That is proper enough. What you say, of course, will
Be all used against you. Eight! O'Neil should be back.
Ah, is that he, I wonder? It sounds like a hack."

MR. O'NEIL

"I am here on the dot. We have ne'er had a case
Where the threads interwove like the bars of fine
lace

As they have in this one. We got three men down
there

And the other was found in his office. I dare
Say they're safe by this time. Shall we move now
with these?"

MR. BENT

"Yes, Miss Snow, you will go with O'Neil, if you
please."

LXXXIII

Miss Sevrance was home, if it so could be called
With her father away. Its deep stillness appalled
As from one room to other she unconsolated went
In the wildest unrest, while forebodings found vent
In the mutterings which fell from her delicate lip,
Blanched and ashen; her eyes red, half hid by the dip
Of lids swollen by tears, and her fingers entwined
As if praying defense from a fear half divined.
Since her mem'ry first ran they were never apart
For a whole day before this, and all that the heart
Of a child toward a parent, or of his unto her
Could be, had existed. Why this break should occur
At the end of a day of such trouble and shame
Perplex'd her and sorrowed, turned impotent and lame
Her logic and reason; made more poignant her grief;
For this night of all nights, she'd have felt the relief
Of his warm sympathy which was ready to break
Forth for her if she had disappointment or ache.

And this moment she sorrowed as never before,
With no hand to press hers, with no kind tongue to pour
Feeling words as a balm to her heart, there to heal
The cruel rents which were made by the poisonous
steel.

LXXXIV

Was she weak? Both in Dyke and Miss Snow she'd
believed,

In the latter the more, and the more been deceived,
If indeed it were not, the whole thing, a mistake.
Was it real or a dream? Was she surely awake?
Did she live? For she seemed to be somewhere in space
With menacing demons, without friend or friend's face
To give smile reassuring and banish the curse
Which hung dismally 'round, and from bad went to
worse

As her fevered brain played with the gruesome details
Of the sad day's events. And—so with woman prevails
The perverse route of thought—Winthrop's name at
the end

Of all others followed, with scant promise to mend
Her distraction. How could he approach if he heard—
And could he miss knowing—what of late had occurred?
In her mind's eye she saw back of all Seagrave stood
With his glance bent on her in a pitying mood,
But vindictive toward Dyke, and her sympathy flowed
From the strong to the weak. If he mere pity showed,

She stood not in its need. So she thought, but she did
Need it more than she deemed. She knew not what
was hid

In the hours passing fast to give her further trial,
Nor what comfort the strength of that one from the isle
In the South could afford her; how his tender eyes
Could console and his tongue could outstraighten the
lies

Which had woven her round with an intricate mesh,
And in excellent phrase give escape from the lesh.

LXXXV

So, exhausted, she threw herself down on the bed,
Not to sleep, but to pass the time hanging like lead,
And if slumber did come, earth was never quite lost,
For there stalked thro her brain a multinomial ghost.
'Twas her father's form first, but he kept his head
turned,

Tho she begged for one glance, he made gesture which
spurned

Her; she fell back in tears. Behold, then 'twas
Seagrave

And his very voice, too, saying: "After a knave
And succeeded by one;" he then bade her allow
Him as token of love to touch lips to her brow.

'Twas transformed into Dyke, but his eyes had turned
green,

And rough, parchment-like ridges of skin rose between;

His lips moved; he would speak; but an unmeasured
arm

Reached from space and hurled him, ere he lifted alarm
Far away. But the form was still there—Geraldine,
Who contemptuously gazed on the ruinous scene,
And, with toss of her head, said: "Five minutes grace,
You'd have journeyed down there in the devil's
embrace."

LXXXVI

With this phantom and that, horrid night wore along
As she toss'd to and fro, and the fever grew strong
In her veins, till at last the faint light of the morn
Showed without, and she slept thro an hour or so torn
From the fateful day's dole; and she finally awoke
To the voice of her servant who precipitately broke,
Crying, into the room, "Oh, Miss Alice, O woe!
What has happened? Three men, big and strong, are
below

Who proclaim they have come to make search of the
place,
And there's one man with whiskers and sun-colored
face

Who would see you at once, and said he could not wait.
What's his name? Well, I think 'twas Wind some-
thing—Windgate."

"Mercy! Mr. Winthrop! Can I go, such a fright?

Why, I've scarce slept a wink thro' this demon-filled night."

LXXXVII

With misgivings she went down the stairs, step by step,
Very doubtful how much of herself she had kept
For this man of all men—was he not? She had thought
So at no distant time. But now had he not brought
This catastrophe on, and should she forgive
Even him—him for whom it was once life to live?
So, still hesitating, she, the portiere drew
And with defiant air went with quickened step thro.

MR. WINTHROP

"Oh, Alice, my loved one, what a trial this has been
For a woman who has ever been wrapped within
The soft shelter afforded to you heretofore;
But I came with all speed—should have been here
before—

When the telegraph brought word I'd not break Bent's
plan,

And you now must divide just so far as you can
All the trouble surrounding you, of which you know
Not the greater as yet, I'm afraid; for 'twill grow
As the day does, and yet if you'll meet it full face
There's deliverance to weigh—something gained you
may place

Against sorrow. Alice! Why so still stand you there?

Have you nothing, my love, for me save that cold stare?"

MISS SEVRANCE

"Mr. Winthrop, be seated. I'm tired, and can't stand Any longer. Perhaps you'll explain why this band Of armed men have come here unannounced to invade Private houses by force and audacious parade— Without reason or sense to arrest Mr. Dyke And Miss Snow—such insults, they at my feelings strike."

MR. WINTHROP

"I know nothing but what every reader may know ; For the papers today several columns bestow, With black letter titles, on the momentous event, Save this isolate fact that I knew Mr. Bent Left New York with suspicion that Dyke was engaged In this crime—that is all."

MISS SEVRANCE

"And what's that? Have they waged Persecution on men, and on women, because They merely suspect them of violating laws?"

MR. WINTHROP

"O Alice!"

MISS SEVRANCE

Miss Sevrance, if you please,"

MR. WINTHROP

"Miss Sevrance,

"I am here, having come at your call a distance——"

MISS SEVRANCE

"But too late."

MR. WINTHROP

"Say not that. You are tired, I'm aware,
From a day of much trouble and unusual care.
I will not detain you; but let me say again
That my hand has not been in this business; no stain
Would, however, adhere if I had. I'd been proud
Had I helped in detecting the villainous crowd—
Such they are if one-half of the report is true.
There's that Dyke—I told Bent what about him I
knew—

And him only I know, and he never a friend.
He lied simply to you about that for some end.
We're acquainted, 'tis true, because we met in school,
From which he was expelled as a robber and fool.
There are five other men, and one woman—Miss
Snow—

The charge counterfeiting; this, at least, you should
know,

And I tell it therefore. The proof seems to be sure."

MISS SEVRANCE

"It is strange Mr. Bent should so freely use your
Name connected with this, and still stranger you should
Have deaf ear for my call, but respond when he would
Send a message."

MR. WINTHROP

"'Tis naught but I can make plain
In few minutes, but shall for the present refrain.
You should trust me for that."

MISS SEVRANCE

"But suppose I should not?"

MR. WINTHROP

"I refuse to consider that, here on the spot,
When you're scarcely yourself, where so much has
gone wrong,
And perhaps it were best to this scene not prolong.
I would beg you to rest, and to also prepare
To hear that your father is mixed in this affair
In some manner; I hope he is not compromised.
I'll be pleased to respond any time when advised
I can render you help; and a messenger from
You will find me at Room Fifty-two, the Vendome."

.XXXVIII

He no sooner had gone that she wished he had staid;
And too late realized the injustice displayed
In the words she had used, in the sentiment hid
For the nonce in her heart—in her heart? God forbid;
But the rather she felt in her unbalanced brain.
And she flew to the door, called again and again:
"O my lover, come back! O my Seagrave, return!
I meant not what I said, and the utterances burn

As a fire in my throat; and you're right, ever right,
And that other is wrong—an offense in my sight;
To my eyes, to my reason—repulsive thing;
And I offered defense—ah, me, that is the sting.
Seagrave gone? Did he go at my unfeeling taunt,
And will never he come howe'er much I may want
His protection and care? O my lover, Seagrave,
O forgive the unkind, the cruel blow which I gave!"
But she cried to the air, and no answer was heard,
Save the anguish that deep in her consciousness stirred.
And she wrung her pale hands in an agony sore,
'Til her rings cut the flesh and its blood markings bore
Direful proof of distress. She the hurt did not feel,
Nor observe the red drops from her wan fingers steal.
She collapsed on the couch, senses dead, nerves awake,
And hysterically cried as tho' her heart would break;
And between sobs she gasped: "O how bitter the fate!
O my loved one, come back! Do I call thee too late?
O what sin in my life that prayer-offerings refuse?
And what inpetto pain thus as torment pursues?"

LXXXIX

Mr. Winthrop went off with his heart none the less
Charged with love for Miss Sevrance; he knew her
distress

And its cure, he believed; 'twas to be at her side
Very little, or pity. She rather would ride
Out the tempest alone. But he sent twice a day

An inquiry polite, a new book or bouquet
Of the rarest rich flowers which he knew she admired.
And he had his reward; ere the week had expired
He received at his room a diminutive note
That was slightly perfumed with sweet heliotrope,
A perfume he had come to regard as a part
Of herself. She was one of the few who have art
To select and adhere to an incense which reeks
With the subtlest charm and a soul-language speaks.
The note said if his breast a forgiveness held
For her ungentle words, which it seemed had expelled
Her from claim to depend on his kindness or aid,
She'd be pleased to see him when his willingness made
It convenient to call. She had something to say
Which should claim his attention with little delay.

XC

He had carefully kept the case under review,
Minutely perusing every day what was new,
The few facts as brought out, and the reporters' hints—
And surmises outnumber the facts in our prints,
For much padding is put into our dailies too large;—
Was aware, too, that Bent had, to uphold the charge
Proof enough, and kept back for the trial even more,
And was satisfied, when the first hearing was o'er
That the prisoners were held. If reporters had known
All the facts, Winthrop knew that they would wider
have strown

Their wide areas of type—that three plates had been
found

Locked in Sevrance's safe; at his home, underground
In the darker back cellar two more were upturned;
That Miss Snow, undismayed, saucy, cold, unconcerned,
'Til they ripped up her skirts, when like tigress she flew
In a passion and fought with a fierceness that few,
Few women could equal—she had reason enough,
For her garments were lined with the villainous stuff.
As good luck for once happened, each man had been
pinched

With some on his person, and Bent knew the case
cinched

In every direction; besides, one sought to feel
For immunity due for the treacherous squeal,
Telling Bent that he knew every thread running thro
From beginning the web, both the old and the new.
Later on when the case celebra came to trial
Mr. Bent disregarded this confessor vile,
And they all went to prison with very short shift,
Save he who for himself in the clouds made a rift
With a suicide's hand,—a confession to save
The expense of convicting one single less knave.

XCI

The holder of knowledge which he wished was much
less,

Lest it prove an embarrassment in his address

To Miss Sevrance, he hastened without any wait
To the Beacon Street house, but he felt his mind grate
With surmisings how she would receive him; if she
Yet was angry where she ought from anger be free,
As she should be, and must, if the truth were all
known,

And the poison had died from her pathway where sown
By that fiend of all fiends. For the woman, his love
Rose to sublimest heights, reaching far and above
Everything on earth, and a pity profound
For the distresses which for the time wove around
Their entangling web, filled his heart and gave pain,
But he kept it concealed, and concealed to remain.
Save freed by occasion, for she was, he believed,
A woman whose anguish could be never relieved
By mere pitying words, 'til her reason had sought
For the truth, and for that she foundation had wrought
Whereon safely to stand. He expected a change,
That she'd come to her senses, and measured the range
Of the charges which had been persistently press'd
Against all of the persons who were in arrest,
And considered them probably both pro and con.
What conclusion she might have arrived at thereon
Was another thing quite—that he did not much care.
But his own position had been looked at more fair,
Or she never had sent him that modest request,
Which behind the mere words held the swell of her
breast

To the old tender love which was born on his isle

In the soft-tempered breeze and the sea's sunny smile,
When all trouble and care seemed removed full as far
As the glowing Centauri or the distant dog star.

XCII

He had prepared for change, and he found change,
Indeed;
A calm pallor had sprung from the sorrowful seed
Which made her look older but, if possible, raised
Her rare beauty so much that the angel was phased
In her face, and her eyes had a newer, deep light,
As if heavenly brightness had illumined the night.
And she smiled, how'er faintly, as she crossed the floor
With the rustle of silk as Seagrave passed the door.
Holding out both her hands, and with uplifted face
Where he could not resist, if he would, to implace
A kiss duly sedate, but with rapturousness warm,
And its sweetness he felt as of shine after storm.

XCIII

Then she gently withdrew from his clasp, and retired
To her blue velvet chair, and the smile he admired
Died away from her face, but it left even more
Of the angel thereon than had shown there before.

MISS SEVRANCE

"You received, then, my note. I'm so glad that you
came."

MR. WINTHROP

"Did you think I would not?"

MISS SEVRANCE

"Why, perhaps."

MR. WINTHROP

"And your name

Alice Sevrance, and mine Seagrave?"

MISS SEVRANCE

"So; it is that

I would speak of. You know? For your simile's pat."

MR. WINTHROP

"'Tis a riddle you give."

MISS SEVRANCE

"Much the harder to guess

Was I myself; no, not my own self, I'll confess.

The last time you were here I was dazed, and it seemed

I was under the will of another, and deemed

I must do as I did, tho I perfectly knew

To my chagrin 'twas wrong—a nightmare reaching thro

Day and night with its foulness, and the more I strove

To get free from the bond it appeared stronger wove

Weakly helpless, I used not the words which I would

But those which the demon there directed I should. .

'Twas like being borne down in a turbulent tide

Wholly powerless to reach the banks smiling and wide;

'Twas like walking in gloom of a hell-darkened day

With a longing for heaven just over the way;

'Twas a suffering deep of an anguish untold
With a sight of relief of which one might take hold,
And yet hung to the grief, to the suff'ring and pain
Because lacking in strength to dissever the chain.
On, however, that day—the hour when that man fell,
There seemed to come sunshine and it ruptured the
spell;

And I once more rejoiced in a freedom of thought,
As refreshing a change as e'er miracle wrought,
And with horror look back, and astonishment, too,
On how little corruption can one's strength subdue."

MR. WINTHROP

"'Tis a marvelous tale; and your misery must
Have been dreadful from fang of that viperous thrust.
When I hit him at Myers for his causeless insult
I might harder have struck and with better result—
Might have killed him, in short; but I never could crave
The contemptible blood on my hands of that knave.
A reciprocal stroke of good fortune shone out
Of the darkness when Bent placed himself on the route.
My blood chills when I think of you wound in the coils
Of a serpent like that. And now, free from those toils,
Let us take happy theme, and that dark one forget."

MISS SEVRANCE

"But I have something else still more marvelous yet;—
You'll please read this letter; you will see that I am
Not, nor was, what you thought, what I thought; but
a sham

Of the Alice you wooed in your far away land;
And we'll bury the past in its grave, and the hand
Which I gave you take back; for I never could hold
An engagement where dross goes as tender for gold."

XCIV

She coucluded; her voice was resonant but low,
With a pathos perhaps indicated. And so,
Without making reply, he approached her and took
The envelope she held in her fingers, which shook,
And the tears started forth from her beautiful eyes,
Which she checked with new strength not the less a
surprise

To herself than to him. What was this that she meant,
He made mental question, as he over her bent
With a look that spoke volumes of love to the maid,
And an assuring kiss on her hot brow allayed
The turmoil of her mind, and one arm he had thrown
'Round her waist, and stood there as if claiming his
own,

And she thrilled from the fire of his hand grasping
hers.

MR. WINTHROP

"Shall I meet your request? If this paper avers
Aught unpleasant, perhaps I would better not read,
But give it to the flames as outside of our need.
For I cannot conceive of a cause 'neath the sky
Why this should not be still an insecable tie.

I am sure I would rather from life have release
Than give you up, my love."

MISS SEVRANCE

"But you must read it, please."

XCV

Perplex'd for the moment, he first paced up and down
On the carpet, and counted the spots, blue and brown
Which he cross'd. He did not make attempt to surmise
What secrets were coming, whether truths or bald lies.
And new troubles for them. The mind, somehow,
refused

To consider the thing. On the contrary, he mused
On the day he first saw Alice Sevrance and saved
Her from tempest and wave which so furiously raved;
How he gathered her up in his arms, with her cheek
Pressing closely to his; how his heart went to seek
In the succeeding days for his love a return,
And the happy reward. Ah, that white flame would
burn

Unquenchable. Arriving at that point, he again
Took his seat with a sigh as a natural refrain
To his thoughts; glanced once more at Miss Sevrance,
and fed

On her beauty. Then turned to the letter and read:

XCVI

(From Mr. Sevrance to Alice)

"MY DEAR ALICE:—I've something to say, and don't
know

How to say it, or how to begin, save I go
Far away thro the years, when as boy I was bad
As I possibly could be, and thus always had
Of rascality more than I well could attend,
And the end of it was as is always the end
Of a criminal course, soon or late, I was sent
With another to jail, where at labor I spent
Five unpromising years. Tho surrounded by crime,
I saw clearer than ever, and for the first time
In my life, drew a line between evil and good,
And believed good the best and resolved when I should
Recover my freedom, I would walk in the path
Of honor. I it kept for a time, tho' it hath
Overweighted my thoughts, for temptation will spring
In attractive apparel, and with effort to bring,
With all sorts of allurements, one back to the ways
Which abandoned have been; so the arch demon preys
At the vitals forever of those who belong
By desire or by chance to the criminal throng—
And more men go astray from some chance they find in
Their pathway, than enter deliberately on sin,
'Tis not a real demon, but a kink of the brain
Which torturously strains at good grace to attain

To the primal at length; so, consider this just,
Never one yet reformed who was worthy of trust.
They may be, as I was, for long years in the right,
Or at least so appear to the multitude's sight;
But at last they are touched at a spot rendered weak,
As I was, and return to the odorous leek.
Nor is this here nor there. I must haste to reveal
To you secrets I thought were enclosed by the seal
Of oblivion's stamp, the last kindness I owe
To a woman whose love's been all daughter could show
To a parent, and yet who's not parent to you.
Your mother I knew not, but I heard it as true
That she died at your birth, a good woman, I trow,
To bring forth such a child. But your father I know
Was a man out of few, but was reputed stern
And 'twas said that he would from the right never
turn;
His possessions were fair, got by good, honest thrift.
He had weight in the town, therefore when he would
sift
Certain wrong we did him—put his name to a note—
Our career was cut short, and the magistrate wrote
Out our prison passports.

“I had sworn to reform,
But I first was to have vengeance on De l'Orme—
That—Robert De l'Orme—was your own father's name;
To accomplish it stole from his yard on the same
Day I returned to town his one sweet baby girl

On a sudden impulse, in the angry whirl
Of ideas unexplained. But possession of you
Was an unbounded trouble, and what I should do
A confounding question. The first act was to flee
Through wood-roads and mountains, and from pursuit
get free.

I might kill you, and who would be wiser or know
What the ending had been? But your sweetness, the
flow

Of the silken-like locks of your soft, chestnut hair
From a brow which then showed, as it now shows, so
fair,

Saved your life; and the next mooted question, to give
You away, or place you in asylum to live.

Miles, and hundreds of miles, on and onward we sped,
And my spirits arose on the thoughts which were fed
By your God-moulded face and your stoical peace,
And I pledged to you life and a part of the fleece
Of the ram Chrysomallus which I would go seek
With all the persistence of the Argonaut Greek.

For the theft, I confess that I had no remorse;
You a talisman grew as I laid my rough course
To the eastward, and saw with each setting of sun
The miles which we covered, a fair distance done.
It was you who inspired, why, I know not, the hope
Of a promising future, wide, boundless in scope;
On the moment, I cast off the name I had borne,
Assumed that which I wear, which in turn has been
torn

Into tatters, and you were my daughter. Thenceforth,
'Twas for you I resolved to make life something worth.
Oh, our traveling was long, o'er the wearisome miles,
And a pinching of funds—for your angel-like smiles,
'Til at last this great city rose high on the view,
Where the past could be buried and life commenced
new;

And I luckily found a poor woman, Ann Wrenn,
Who died, you'll remember, when you were about ten,
Who was kindly toward you. Very humble our life
For some years, while I fought with all strength in the
strife.

But good fortune the way always readily paved,
As I valiantly marched; aye, I more and more saved;
When the battle was fought, and I stood in the bar
It seemed that the zenith I had reached from nadir.
Looking back twenty years—I was young then, and
strong,

With all faculties bright which to manhood belong—
I had pride in my work and its wonderful growth,
But above all in you to whom I all oweth.
With intensified care, I observed where you stepp'd,
And was ever alert to all harm intercept;
You, indeed, were a treasure; I saw you advance
In both knowledge and beauty with pride, felt the
glance

Of your womanly eyes, 'til it cleft off the love
Of the father—almost—placed another above
And superior thereto; but I crushed down the same

So surely it did not rise again to my shame.
And my care—how you paid it, a thousand times o'er
In the sunshine you scatter'd thro years just a score!
I believed, and yet think I was all unto you
In my way. We were happy—I gloat in the view—
As daughter and father could be. Few were the homes
That were freer than ours from the decrepit gnomes
Of differences, folly, and strife; and a few—
Very few, that are bless'd by the sunlight and dew
Of trust perfect and joy, and of grace, as was ours.
It was, and is over. The sunniest sky lowers
At a time least expected. The fates made me meet,
To my horror, years several ago, on the street,
My companion in jail. I desired to ignore
The persistent fellow, but he pressed me the more,
Like a hound on my track, with the threat to expose
All the past; and at last for his riddance I chose
A weak course, gave him funds—paid the rascal
blackmail,
And this opened the way to a dreary entail
Which brought with it destruction, for he slowly drew
Me into acquaintance with this villainous crew,
And now jibes at my folly. He told me last night,
With a leer that disgusted, that back in Raquitte,
In the very same month that you, Alice, were lost,
De l'Orme chanced to meet a misfortune which cost—
Cost him everything—life; briefly put, he was slain,
I suspect by this man.

“I can never again
On this earth see your face. Ere these lines meet your
eye,

Arthur Sevrance to all will have uttered good-bye,
And the coroner been called. For the poison I've kept
On me always, for fear that detectives who slept
To appearance awhile, would awake, and aware
I'd be surely condemned, but sworn never to share
Second time prison life. I've related these things
In a short, hurried way, which a memory hot brings,
That may in the future be of value to you.
And because simple justice demands them your due;
To exhibit, no less, that your blood is not soiled
By a trace of the crime which has so utterly spoiled
This accurs'd life of mine. So farewell and farewell.
Show this letter to none; burn it up and don't tell
What it says. I beg you, if you can, to forgive;
And I hope happy years will be those which you live.
I subscribe, as you've known me, as bitter tears dance
In my eyes, truly yours—farewell,

ARTHUR SEVRANCE.”

XCVII

Winthrop read the last line, and refolded the sheets,
Amid silence so deep he could hear his heart-beats
And his fingers ran slowly o'er the paper's long crease;
And his thoughts went astray, as flotsam of the seas.
'Til he chanced to look up, saw the pallor which lay

On Miss Sevrance's cheek, like a mask of death clay,
And a tremor which ran on her lips plainly said
That life stood as forfeit, and 'twere rest to be dead.
Seagrave sprang to her chair, on the floor by her side,
With his arm 'round her form, let one hand o'er hers
glide,

And his eyes looking up, with a warm, loving glow:
"O my Alice! Alice! 'Twas not so! O not so!
Not a thing—not a shadow of doubt touched my mind.
This, if anything, should you and I closer bind.
'Twas yourself that I loved, and yourself is here still,
With the goodness and sweetness which all ideals fill.
You have suffered—are suffering. I wish I might share
What I may of such trials. Events lately laid bare
We'll forget, if we can, and the actors forgive
As we humanly may. For the future we'll live
In the holiest love which the earth will allow
With its grossness. Permit me to reseal the vow."

* * * * *

On a wave girt isle in this southern zone,
A man and a woman stood together
This winter, and looked on what has been known
In current gossip, light as a feather
Blown hither and yon in changeful weather,
As a castle builded by a hermit old—
A weary wanderer, adventurous, bold.

The house had fallen, and the logs were rot,
And mosses and ferns were o'er all growing,
And where the garden and where it was not
Was all the same to the viewers, owing
To the rankest weeds and trees o'erflowing
In a favored clime, with never a dearth
Of tropical growth to cover the earth.

They silently stood, and the woman turned
To the splendid man and sweetly smiling,
And he clasped her there and a warm kiss burned
On lips a stoic would deem beguiling,
And with hands entwined the dear hour whiling,
They went to their boat and swiftly away
From Isle of the Blest of their early day.

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